



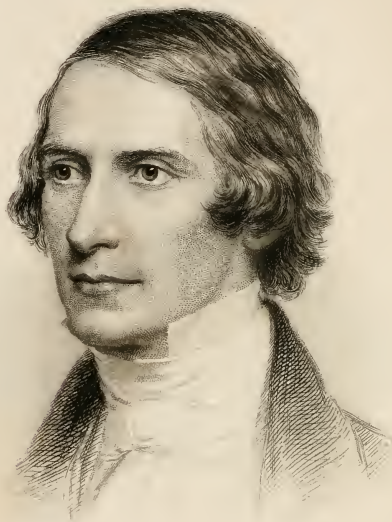
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CHRISTIAN
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DAYS AND THOUGHTS.

BY

REV. EPHRAIM PEABODY, D. D.
c

SECOND EDITION.



BOSTON:
CROSBY, NICHOLS AND COMPANY.
117 WASHINGTON STREET.
1858.

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It was not by accident that the first of the Beatitudes was, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who, conscious of their spiritual poverty and looking upward, gaze on the perfection above, and long for a better and purer life. In this spirit we would approach Him who gave himself to establish a higher virtue in human hearts, to put purer affections into the home, to save men from the bondage of sin, to illuminate the darkness of the grave, and guide us to the eternal life. We join in the great and holy ordinance which connects the love of heaven with the needs of earth, not because we are strong, but because we are weak ; not because we have any claim on heaven's rewards, but because we have need of heaven's mercy. When we kneel at the altar, it is in frailty and sin, and to implore forgiveness and help. We will commemorate Christ's love, though it reproach us with our ingratitude. And reverently and humbly we will hope that the remembrance of his passion may in some degree prepare us to receive the benefits of his death. Before the cross of the Sufferer and the Redeemer, let us pray for his strength to do God's will and to bear his will.

COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY GOD, THE FOUNTAIN OF ALL WISDOM,
WHO KNOWEST OUR NECESSITIES BEFORE WE ASK, AND
OUR IGNORANCE IN ASKING ; WE BESEECH THEE TO HAVE
COMPASSION UPON OUR INFIRMITIES ; AND THOSE THINGS
WHICH FOR OUR UNWORTHINESS WE DARE NOT, AND FOR
OUR BLINDNESS WE CANNOT ASK, VOUCHSAFE TO GIVE
US FOR THE SAKE OF THINE INFINITE MERCY IN JESUS
CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.

PREFACE.

DR. PEABODY left directions that a volume like this, of a somewhat private and domestic character, should be prepared from his writings. He loved to associate particular scenes and trains of thought with the days set apart for them by the Church. In order to increase the influence of such associations, more especially among the young of his own Society, he had, for a long time, been intending to prepare a book of this kind. It was much in his thoughts during his last sickness ; but he was too

feeble to do any thing more than give a general idea of what he desired to have done. The selections here given from his writings have been made, it is believed, in accordance with what would have been his wishes. If some of them should seem to be only remotely or fancifully connected with the places which they occupy in the book, it must be remembered how delicate and far-reaching the association of religious ideas may be; and that the most important influence of the best religious writings is often found in the trains of emotion which they awaken, and the atmosphere which they throw around the reader, almost independently of the direct instructions which they impart. If, therefore, some of the Thoughts in this book should seem to have no logical relationship to the Days under which they appear, it may none the

less be true, that, like interludes in a well-ordered service, they may harmonize with the sentiment, and add to the impressiveness of the occasion.

The book will do little good where it is hastily read and put aside. Its voice is not one to be heard in the streets, or to join in the discussions of the day. It rather asks to be admitted to the confidence of those who will receive it, in the stillness of their most retired and private hours. Its calm tones of religious tenderness and trust would find their way into the closet. It offers itself as a companion to the thoughtful in their seasons of meditation and their times of trial. It would touch their religious sensibilities. It would feed them with devout thoughts. It would store their minds with images of Divine purity and love. It would, at least, suggest to them topics of mo-

mentous interest, and gently lead them to the fountain of comfort, strength, and eternal life.

J. H. M.

MILTON, *December 18, 1857.*

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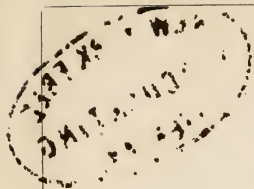
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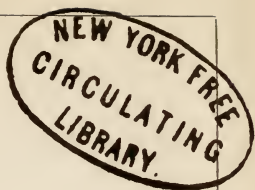
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PREPARATORY THOUGHTS.



The ways in which Christ affects man's salvation are as various as the methods by which men are awakened to penitence for sin, and to love for righteousness. Where he is truly received, he puts a soul into man, lights it up with faith, and gives to its best sentiments and affections an energy which is stronger than any outward ill. The life which he awakens is the best and highest life of manhood, the life of pure thoughts and elevated purposes, of righteous principles and self-denying affections. It is the life of faith, of reverence, and filial obedience. He, in whose soul these affections are awakened, and these principles established, can never be out of place where God, or where good beings are. It is a life full of the omens of immortality. A reverential trust in God seems to associate one with His eternal existence. Prayer takes the soul within the veil, and all righteous affections seem to have a place in the permanent order of the moral world.



PREPARATORY THOUGHTS.

SALVATION BY CHRIST.

SALVATION by Christ is the subject of the New Testament. To save men was the one purpose of Christ's coming; and the word salvation includes in it all that is highest and most hopeful in man's destiny. Christ came to save that which is lost, to save his people from their sins, to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,—to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

But how does Christ save men? Not by any single method, but by whatever he was, or did, or taught, or suffered, through which a human soul is redeemed from sin. Here I do not speak of what was necessary in order that

God might forgive sin, nor how Christ's mission accorded with the secret purposes of the Most High. These mysteries are above us. It is not necessary that we should understand them. What I wish to show is that Christ saves men by arousing and awakening the better life of the soul,—that till this is done nothing is done, and that with this all is done, and that it is done through means as varied as human wants and circumstances. There were Pharisees probably saved by Christ's rebuke of their hypocrisy. There were sinners doubtless saved by his compassionate friendliness. The guilty woman that knelt and washed his feet with her tears, he won by encouraging words. I can imagine that there were children on whom his hands were laid in benediction, who, through the memory of that act, afterwards became apostles and martyrs. Through these and many other ways he still acts on mankind. Christ saves men by every better thought which his words put into their hearts, by the holier purposes which he awakens, by the benignity of his example, by the power of self-sacrifice, by the divinity of his death, by encouragements

and by warnings. Sometimes his power is felt through life ; his name is the first on the lips of childhood, and the last in the fluttering and feeble breath of the dying hour ; and sometimes his influence is not felt till trial or sorrow or remorse open the heart to the Helper and the Comforter.

But whatever the method of salvation, the result is the same. It is a turning from sin to righteousness. It is the awakening of the soul—a new birth to a higher and Christian life. Without this there is no salvation, and with it, whatever the method, the man is saved.

BEST HOURS.

There are seasons when, for the moment at least, the power of the world seems to drop. A strange and awful sense of responsibility comes upon us. Aspirations rise up out of the soul like the morning mist kindling in the sun as it rises from the mountain top towards heaven. We long for a higher and holier life. The vanity of the world, the worth of virtue, the goodness of God, and the peace of a trusting

and devout heart are revealed to us. It is a heavenly vision open before the soul. . . . These hours, when the soul is freed from its bonds, and holds communion with truth and God, and sees revealed the realities of its existence, are blessed hours—hours of heaven—hours which if obeyed shall raise the soul upward to heaven. Repel not the heavenly vision by disobedience. Sacrifice any thing rather than these heavenly impulses. Give up any thing that interferes with carrying them out into the life. These hours of the soul's communion with truth and God are the precious hours of life. They are the scattered fountains in the desert, at which the fainting traveller revives his strength and courage. Then heavenly voices speak, and happy is he who gives heed to the heavenly vision, which is from God, and conducts to God.

DIVINE AID.

And let it be remembered that this Divine aid is really help. It does not supersede human exertion, but helps to make it effective. It

does not overbear the human faculties, but invigorates them. It does not substitute a foreign virtue, attaching it like foreign fruit to dead branches ; but it puts life into the trunk, that it may bear fruit of itself.

The idea seems too sublime to be true, and yet it is in accordance with the whole order of nature. The little flower that in the open meadows lives and dies in a season, what agencies have concentrated themselves upon it ! The wondrous chemistry of the soil, the rains that have drifted up from the far-off sea to pour out their refreshment around it, the sunlight, coming myriads of miles to swathe its roots in their benignant warmth, the revolution of the seasons, all that is grandest in the universe, conspire to unfold into life that which is humblest. So the human soul lives in the midst of heavenly help. The course of nature is not something apart from the Divine Being, but through that order God comes down and meets the wants of the human mind. He helps man through his daily providence, he helps each individual through the general human relations he has established. He helps

him through revelation, and helps him through that spiritual aid which he needs. The order of nature is not the narrow, contracted matter which it is sometimes described as being. Into the great circle of the Divine order, always natural to Him, even when miraculous to us, enter, not merely the few laws of the physical universe, but the great system of moral discipline, the revelations of Christ, and the aids of Heaven.

REVERENCE.

How beautiful it is in the child ! You have seen one reading the history of some heroic and good man ; some one who had lived and suffered for truth and right, and as the child read, his cheeks were flushed and his eyes filled with unconscious tears. All his noblest feelings are aroused. He would rather be the unknown follower of that righteous man in his failures than the leader of others in their success. For days after, you see the influence of that hour's reading, in a higher tone of thought. It is as if a fresh gale from the mountains had blown through his heart, sweeping out for the time its

mean and petty passions and aims. Blessed child, you say, if it never lose the disposition to look up, admiringly, lovingly, reverently, to that which is above itself. You pray that the passing emotion may become the habit of the soul, till it shall have a taste for the beauty and grandeur of virtue, such as the true artist has for the beauty and grandeur of the noblest standards of art. For you know that what he looks up to in this spirit, he will insensibly, according to the measure of his powers, become like. And you know that when he has ceased to look up, when he is disposed to see nothing higher or better than his own petty self, when reverence and its related sentiments are gone, their growth is ended, and moral paralysis, like a shadow, is creeping on.

More beautiful still is it in age, when the emotions of youth, purified and elevated, have grown into an habitual, trusting, religious reverence for God. I do not here speak of it as a duty. One of its great privileges is that it preserves the youth of the heart. Without it, man has only the earth and the past. He looks downward and backward. If aught of early

life remain, it is its frivolity and not its freshness—the fading morning without its dews and fragrance. But this reverence which looks upward, which in trusting dependence connects the soul with the highest goodness, is the beginning of the everlasting life—of youth which is eternal. It opens, to receive the light, the whole moral nature of man. It lifts up the affections which otherwise must creep on the ground, as a tree in its growth each year lifts higher and higher the vines which have wound their tendrils around its branches, hanging out their leaves and clusters to rejoice in the air and the sun. So long as a loving reverence for superior worth remains, there is hope of the frailest and guiltiest. His hand touches the altar. His feet, though it be on the lowest round, is still on the ladder by which the angels ascended to heaven.

ADVENT.

COLLECT.

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty, to judge both the living and dead, we may rise to the life immortal. And this we beg in the name of our Mediator; though whom we ascribe unto Thee all honour and glory, now and ever. Amen.

THE NEED OF A DIVINE REVELATION INCREASES WITH THE PROGRESS OF CIVILIZATION.

A SERMON FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. *Rom. xiii. 14.*

IN entering upon that period of the year which calls our attention to the advent of Christ and the beneficent influence of his religion in past ages, it becomes us to consider it in its relation to the wants of our own time. The fundamental characteristic of the age, the source of many other characteristics, and fostered by what itself creates, is the immense and general activity of the intellect, and the direction of this activity to secular affairs. By the education of schools and the severer education of practical life, by individual freedom, by the multiplied and multiplying careers open

to the enterprising and aspiring, by the poverty which rebels against its restrictions, by the luxury which would make the world tributary to its pleasures, by the prizes held out on every side to the clear mind and the energetic will, the general intellect is stimulated to an activity in secular pursuits such as the world never saw before. One of the results of this intellectual and secular activity is seen in the theory, that, in some inexplicable way, the advance of knowledge supersedes the necessity of revelation; that, in the growing light of civilization, Christianity is less needed, that it is becoming obsolete, that it has been a good religion for rude ages, that it is good now for the ignorant, but that the intelligent and the cultivated may find, in the study of nature and the human heart, what answers their purposes quite as well and is more satisfactory.

The text, taken from the lesson of the day, implies that, in putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, we are laying aside what is low and sensual, and making provision for the higher faculties of our nature. The inference from this is, that in proportion to the culture of our

higher faculties will be our need of His religion and the extent of its influence over us.

The precise point, however, which I would urge, is this ;—that the increased intellectual activity of the age, instead of diminishing, increases the need of an authoritative religious revelation, both in regard to the faith and practice of men.

I. I call attention to the general fact that every increase of faculty, though it increases power, involves also an increase of needs. The stone in the quarry has no needs whatsoever. The air folds it round about, the rains fall on it, the sunbeams glow and flame on its surface, but the rock remains impassive, needing none of them. The tree adds to dead matter the element of organizing life, and air, rain and sunshine are essential to its existence. With the added faculties of animal life come added and corresponding needs. In man there is a sudden and vast enlargement of faculty, but with it an equal multiplication of the points of dependence on what is external to himself. Man, the most powerful, is also the most dependent creature on earth. The general law

follows him into the spiritual life. The brute has neither hope nor fear for the morrow ; but man is tortured by remorseful memories, is racked by anxieties, is at the mercy of hope and fear, lives a needy mendicant on human affections, his soul is awed by conscious relations with God, he recoils from the mysteries of the grave, and treads with trembling the borders of the eternal world. He is in the midst of the vast agencies of Nature and of God, and by the very intelligence which raises him above the animal, is made conscious of his weakness and dependence. And now, going one step farther, I add, that the higher the culture, the greater the needs. The faculties of the savage are undeveloped, and his needs are few. He sleeps life away in a kind of unconscious stupor, while, because of improved tastes, of nicer moral perceptions and awakened sensibilities, the cultivated man's being throws out on every side its tender nerves to be thrilled by the least touch of pleasure, or tortured by the invasion of pain. One might almost describe civilization as a condition of multiplied needs—physically, mentally, morally, a con-

dition of multiplied needs. It is no accident, but the merciful law of God, that the same civilization which develops individual power shall create the restraints of dependence and the humanizing influences of mutual needs. Thus culture invariably increases need. It awakens the sensibilities, it gives them a keener edge, it multiplies their demands, it carries a man out of himself, and connects his well-being with a constantly enlarging circle of influences external to himself—making him at the same time more self-subsistent and more dependent.

Leaving this general statement for its particular applications, in the first place,

1. The advance of intelligence increases the need of that assurance in regard to religious *truth* which comes to us through an authoritative revelation. Increased mental activity, when applied to religion, has certain necessary results. It enlarges the number of religious questions, it measures their magnitude more justly, it requires greater definiteness of belief, and finally and above all, in order to believe, it exacts more decisive evidence. To an intelli-

gent mind, religious questions, concerning as they do man's relations to God and his own lasting welfare, are of necessity the most important of all. The active mind, unless utterly frivolous, can never be satisfied to have its inquiries shut up within the world of the senses. Grandeur and more solemn themes demand attention. In the great darkness, the eye strains itself to see what is in the realm of the invisible. What is the meaning of these vague apprehensions, these instinctive forelookings, which overleap the barrier of time, and compel me to speculate on the great problems of man's existence? Is there a God? What is this mystery of death? Does the moral order of the world culminate and complete itself in a righteous retribution? Is there any safe guide through these bewildering mazes of fear, and hope, and doubt? An ignorant age is satisfied with answers which do not satisfy an intelligent age. Take, for example, the doctrine of a future life. An unthinking age accepts without question the traditional faith. It dwells more amidst the instinctive sentiments and tendencies, and finds them sufficient. But an intelli-

gent age questions. What evidence that man lives hereafter? We are referred to two classes of proof. First, to the analogies of Nature—to the seed that breaks forth into the plant, to the successive developments in animal life, to the general moral order of the world, and the reason for supposing a doctrine to be true which seems necessary to the completeness of that order. But while such analogies suggest, illustrate, fortify one's faith in a future life, they do not prove its reality. Secondly, we are referred to the human consciousness. But to say that we are conscious of immortality is to use words without meaning. To adopt an idea well put by one of our brethren, we are conscious of thoughts, of feelings, of what transpires within us, but we are no more conscious of a future fact, of what shall take place beyond the grave, than we are of what is now taking place on the other side of the globe. There is but one conceivable way in which we can have any sufficient and reliable assurance of a future life, and that is through revelation. The very intelligence which makes the importance of the question more deeply felt, makes

the revelation from above more essential. In the midnight of the world, the soul cries out for light ; and to meet this greatest of all needs, behold ! beyond the horizon of this world rises the Sun of Righteousness.

We overrate the range of the intellect, and mistake its sphere. To expect of it, because of its enlarged activity in its appropriate sphere, a corresponding power to discern truths beyond its sphere, is to expect of the microscope the discoveries of the telescope. The highest cultivation of the mere intellect scarcely carries one, so far as the knowledge of the future world is concerned, beyond the position of a child. A knowledge of mathematics helps us to define the position of the stars, but throws not one ray of light on the question of a righteous retribution. A life's study of political economy does not enable one to say with a particle more of assurance whether the penitent may hope for forgiveness. The torchlight of logic is not sufficient to illuminate the eternal world. And the increase of intelligence, in making us more conscious of the need of religious truth, instead of superseding Christianity,

makes it, as an authoritative revelation, more and more essential to mankind.

2. This is equally true on practical grounds. Greater mental activity manifests itself in a greater activity in all the affairs of life; and this creates the need of a clearer moral guidance. What an infinite variety of moral questions is every man of business obliged to settle for himself every day. Every project, every method of carrying out his enterprises, every dealing with his neighbors, involves some question of right and wrong. The very pressure of his cares and the magnitude of his duties makes it essential that he should have clear, definite, and settled principles of conduct. Dreamy and mystical sentimentalisms do not meet his wants. The growing and engrossing activity of the world requires the guidance of *laws*, which do not merely suggest, but which speak with *authority*, which do not admit of parleying with the passions;—and such laws can have an unquestioned authority only as they are the acknowledged expression of His will who is the moral Ruler and Judge of man.

3. This increased mental activity, increases

the need of a personal attention to religion. This would be true, were it only to preserve the balance of man's nature. The most melancholy condition of society is not one in which ignorance prevails, but one of great intellectual activity unsoftened and unguided by religious faith. It is the surrender of man up to all sensual, selfish, and cruel instincts and interests; for the intellect is only an instrument; if not subjected to moral and religious principle, it will be used by the passions, and thus the most dangerous men have been men of great intellectual activity without any controlling faith in duty or God. Add intellect to the animal, and it is what man would be without moral and religious principle—a moral Frankenstein—an enlarging brain and a contracting heart—powerful for mischief and regardless of good.

Amidst so many claims and preoccupations, if religion is attended to at all, it must be from a personal choice. The immense outward activity of a highly civilized age, is unfavorable to devotion, because it preoccupies the mind. For a mind not preoccupied, nature and life have many serious appeals which suggest the idea of

duty, of God, and of futurity. Mountain and sky and sea proclaim Him whose presence moves over the universe. Sickness and death utter their monitory voices, and the impressions made by the great ministries of Providence fill as large a proportional space in the mind as they do in the life. The patriarchal shepherd on his Eastern plains was untaught, but his heart, comparatively free from preoccupation, was more open to the religious aspects of the world. The voice of God was in the thunder ; —the rainbow, built by no mortal hands, spoke of the divine benignity ; and death, which broke into the narrow circle of companionship, was an epoch in his uneventful history. In his poverty, he slept on the ground, but he saw the stars rise and the stars set, and all the peaceful ongoings of the heavens. And thus these primitive times were characterized by a tendency to religious thought. But civilization, with its fevered passions, its incessant toils, its conflicting interests, is occupied with the earth, and is distracted from the more remote and gentle voices of Providence. It builds a vast palace, it rears its walls on solid foundations, makes it

glorious with tower and dome, and fills it with the luxuries of all lands, but when it lies down to rest, there is no opening in the arched roof through which it beholds the stars. The work of its own hand, the dwelling which itself has made and rejoices in, shuts out the vision of the heavens. When the patriarch in the solitude of the plains made the stone his pillow, in the midst of the vast surrounding nature, alone and helpless, under the overaching sky, we do not wonder that to his dreams there should come a vision of ascending and descending angels, nor that on awakening he should have said, with awe-struck heart, surely God is in this place. But our more strenuous activity in worldly affairs, shuts out these more simple and natural religious influences. The voices of Providence find men preoccupied—the scholar with his books—the merchant with his merchandise—the man of science with the laws of material nature—the statesman with the laws of society—everywhere, preoccupation. If, under such circumstances, religion is to have any restraining and guiding power, it will rule, not by accident, but must be enthroned by the voluntary

choice over the mind. The greater the attention to other things, the more necessity of a voluntary attention to religion. Who needs to pray for God's guidance and help, if it be not the man employed from morning till night on affairs and projects, every one of which involves some question of duty, who lives amidst urgent temptations, whose whole life is a battle, who sleeps in his armour, and dreams of the conflicts of the day?

But I am so busy that I have no time to meditate or pray. This expresses precisely the tendency I am describing. Let the unoccupied, it is said, meditate and pray—let the sick pray—let the dying pray—but I have no time for it.

If this be true, it does not diminish the need of religion, but is only a confession of the power of the world. A mind thus preoccupied, will never, except from a decisive personal choice, seek the help which cometh from above. Beset by calls and claims, clamorously demanding attention, some of them must be, or will be, postponed to others. For example, it must be a matter of choice if you read the Bible, if you hallow the new day with prayer,

or rush with a prayerless heart into the world. The activity of an intelligent mind carries man beyond the passive, quiet, receptive state, and he will have no more religion than he chooses to have. God may work with him, but to him the qualification is emphatically true, that he must still work out his own salvation with fear and trembling.

4. The character of the times demands a more careful and thorough system of religious instruction for the young. I do not mean that religion is more important in one age than another, nor to one person than another; nor do I have in my mind the necessity equally essential at all times of awakening and training aright the religious sentiment; but rather the necessity of instructing the young in the evidences, the doctrines, the duties, and the history of our faith. The need of this increases with the general intelligence, and among others for two reasons:

1. When mind is free and active it will bring all subjects boldly within the sphere of its inquiries. And a subject of such primary importance as Christianity cannot fail to awaken

constant discussion. But just in proportion to the amount of discussion,—being such as it commonly is,—there is need of a previous knowledge of what Christianity claims to be, and of what it teaches. The most common skepticism is that which is occasioned by hearing doubts proposed, while one is too ignorant to understand their real force or merits, and too busy to give them any real examination. A young man just entering life hears some trivial cavil respecting some fact in the new Testament history. He cannot reply to it, he is too much occupied to investigate the subject, he does not understand its importance, and it remains in his mind ever after, an unanswered cavil. It is like a slight crack in a crystal vase, insignificant, and yet the value of the vase is ruined. He knows so little, that he fancies that every thing in the Gospels may be equally open to suspicion. A thin, chill mist of doubt spreads over the whole subject of religion. He does not disbelieve, and yet he does not believe. Thus, owing to his ignorance, a single cavil may interpose itself between Christianity and his mind, like a screen, so thin as hardly to be

visible, and yet able to intercept the warmth of a fire. Had this young man received in early life proper instruction, he would perhaps have understood the groundlessness of the cavil, or at any rate would have seen that it did not affect the substantial authority of the religion. Thus the intellectual activity which stimulates speculation and every form of loose discussion, requires a knowledge of certain general facts, to prevent that speculation from being the source of constant error. Such knowledge will be gained by few after they enter active life; and certainly, by very few, unless a foundation has been laid for it in early life.

2. It is essential, in order that some sense of the relation of religion, and its proportionate importance to other subjects, may not be lost. In our state of civilization, each individual is obliged to confine himself very much to some single department of activity. With our limited faculties, what we give little attention to will seem of little importance. The increase of intelligence gives a peculiar form to the evil. A youth is carefully educated in certain departments of literature and science, and prepared

for some special vocation in life. Other subjects fade away into the remote distance and sink into insignificance. His interests, his enthusiasm, his hopes and fears, are aggregated around the objects to which he has given his thoughts. It rises a vast mountain in the midst of a plain. The mind will hold but a certain amount, and being filled up with secular interests, by a kind of mechanical pressure excludes religious interests. Many become skeptical not through thought, but by this mechanical exclusion of religion from the mind. Being out of the mind, it seems to have no real existence; to be a mere illusion. The very circumstance that one is educated in other departments thus makes it more essential that the young should receive a corresponding religious culture.

The activity of the times increases the importance of religious rites, and forms, and institutions. The awakened mind may in some respects be more self-dependent; but it is also more sensitive to external influences. Intelligence does not make men less worldly, it only substitutes for the gross forms of worldliness one more intellectual, but not less tyrannical

and dangerous. Among our people so engrossed, so intensely occupied with what is just around, the thousand voices of the world calling them this way and that, what would be the fate of religion, if no outward voice or institution ever reminded them of her authority? For him who lives in retirement, and spends his days in meditation and amidst tranquil and un-urging duties, the groves may answer for his temple, and all days to him may be sabbaths. But he whose life is engrossed by worldly cares and labors, who is whirled round in a maelstrom of ceaseless excitements,—woe unto him if there be nothing but his own heart to recall the thought of eternity and of God. Above all men, he needs that the Sabbath should break across the monotony of his labors; that the church should confront him in the street; that the Bible should lie on his table; that the bells should summon him to worship; and that the world without should in some part at least be dedicated to religion and her offices.

I have thus presented some of the reasons, on account of which the greater attention given to education, and the greater activity in secular

affairs, make the need greater of the teachings of Christianity, and of a voluntary subjection to it in the practical life. Education divorced from religion is power without corresponding guidance. Without it, civilization has in itself the elements of its decay. It inflames the passions, it multiplies pleasures, it stimulates desires, it puts sharpened swords into the hands of men, and if while doing this it does not instal a more sacred law above itself, and does not give to it a willing obedience, the very blessings we most prize become the peril and ruin of man. We are like guests at a poisoned festival. The garlands drop deadly dews, the lights are sepulchral, the wilder the joy the more certain the doom, and when the portals are thrown open for their departure, it is to enter darkness and the grave.

And while the need of what I have spoken is recognized in the whole history of man, it has been felt most deeply by the most thoughtful, and by them in their most thoughtful hours. Not the frivolous, the base, and the ignorant, but the noblest minds of antiquity were the ones most weighed down by the solemn burden of

these problems of human duty and destiny. All ancient philosophy is a sad groping through infinite and baffling mysteries for those truths which are vouchsafed to the humblest Christian believer. However unfaithful in the practical life, it seems as if the moment that minds of the highest order addressed themselves to their most serious tasks, they rose into the region of religious ideas. The greatest works of genius, though not dedicated to religion, in a vast proportion of cases catch their best illumination from the side-lights of faith. The self-consecration of Milton—the scholar's prayer, as humble as a child's, of Bacon—the blended science and piety of Newton, are revelations of the soul's great need. And that need, felt most in their most inspired hours of thought, is disclosed by the culture which makes one aware of the limits of human intelligence, and of the realm beyond, from which no light comes save that which is divine.

MEANS OF CHRISTIAN CULTURE.

I do not attempt to enumerate the varied means which, in a Christian land, and because of the Advent of Christ, are adapted to promote a religious life. But by the mercy of Providence they attend us, a gracious companionship, from birth to death. The hymns that a mother taught, the Scriptures read from childhood, not only the influences of nature and the promptings of the human heart, not only the rising and setting day, the glory of the stars and the beauty of the earth, but, that which gives meaning to nature, the revelations of Christ, and all the offices that give utterance to religious emotion, the baptism of children, the memorials of Christ, the churches that confront the routine of daily care and gather men within their precincts for worship, the words of promise which we utter as the dead are borne to the grave, the recorded lives and thoughts of good men, the benedictions of the bridal, the prayers

of those that part, and the thanksgivings of those that meet, these are all promoting in the soul religious faith and principle.

A CHRISTIAN HOME.

And why lingers such a sacredness about the memory of a religious home? Because it was consecrated by religion. Because there the social affections and religious faith grew up together. There the love of the parent became an interpreter of the character of God. There the child learned to believe and adore,—kneeling by a mother's knee it learned to look up with confiding trust to infinite Love,—to see in all above and around the manifestations of an indulgent Parent. In the religious child's pure conceptions, before the imagination is bound to the earth, and the mind dwarfed and burdened and blinded by earthly cares, everything assumes something of the character and purity of infinity. Time and eternity, earth and Heaven, man and God meet nigh together in its thoughts, and blend together to invest

his home with holy affociations. And hence it is, that in after years, when cares and sins have darkened above the valley of life, that first home seems a midway step between earth and Heaven,—a summit raised high above the clouds, where a heavenly radiance lingers and the feet of angels tread.

When the young man is cast into new temptations, as thousands are, and the words of the scoffer assail his faith, and the seductions of the corrupt loosen his principles, and innocence is gone, and the friendship of the virtuous is gone, and trust in God gone,—as he goes down the dark pathway of shame and sin, what still holds him back as he stands on the brink, and keeps him from plunging into the gulf? It is the power and the spell laid on his childhood's heart in his early home. His dead parents speak to him from their graves. Their silent lips have a living language for him. Though like the prodigal, he has wandered from his home, and trampled on its early lessons, he cannot forget them. In the pauses of frivolity and sin, the tones of parental solicitude, their words of fond and solemn warnings rise on his soul

and will be heard. The years between vanish away,—the world about vanishes away,—his early home rises out of the past,—the tree that shaded it, the hills that environed it, the skies that looked down on it. The very graves give up their dead—parent, brother, sister—to people it. He is a child again. Again he hears the affectionate counsels whose neglect has been his ruin. He kneels again in the circle of affection, and hears the words of devotion, and the God whom his parents honored seems near to him, and the hardened sinner is melted, till it seems as if the prayers that went up to Heaven from the heart of childhood, had fallen like the dew again from Heaven upon his manhood's heart, to soften and to strengthen.

THE BIBLE.

A Bible, now worn and defaced, has descended as an heirloom in your family. You can remember how, on the Sabbath evenings, you were taught from it your first religious lessons. The venerable forms of those who

instructed you are now gone to their reward, and this book is transmitted to you. You may easily buy a costlier and richer volume, one that shall contain the same truths and the same words, but to you it is not the same book. The Bible you have inherited is all covered over with memories. The associations of a century lie within its stained pages. The dead sit by as you read it. It is not mere words you read,—they are repeated by the voices of those now in heaven. To others it may be nothing, but to you, even while it lies unopened on your table, it is a connecting bond between you and years long gone. It recalls those whom you loved and honored, in the way that you best love to remember them. It speaks of your own early years, when the heart was purer perhaps, when the soul was less worldly, and the thoughts rose to heaven on lighter wings; and though sad and reproaching to memory, it is sacred, it brings before you the good examples you have known in times long past, it is associated with your best thoughts, and purposes, and affections; and therefore it is that gold could not buy this volume from you; and for

like reasons your children shall cherish it when you are no more.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF FOLLOWING CHRIST.

The theory of virtue which seems to belong to our northern climate, is, that there is but one kind, that of struggle, conflict and conquest of sin through force of will. On the contrary, the forms of virtue, and the methods of reaching a Christian character, are as various as are the trees of the forest, or the features of men. One has vehement passions, an energetic nature, born for struggle, and miserable if it hath not difficulties to overcome. This man stands front to front with a temptation, and resists and conquers it as a foe. He rules his appetites and passions. He says, thus and so God requires, and I will do it. He will be just, he will be true, he will not yield to the temptations that beset him. Life is a conflict, and with a resolute will, as in a battle, he takes his stand on the Lord's side. The virtues which this man attains are the virtues of the will, and they

are admirable. But, after all, they constitute only one style of virtue, and it is the style which belongs to such a constituted character. Let no one fancy that it is the only kind. On the contrary, there are gentle, unforceful natures, whose natural characteristic is a loving, trusting, affectionate temper. They have no great violence of passion, and no great force of will. Their Creator never meant them for conflict. They grow up as the flowers grow, as delicate and as beautiful; they require shelter and protection, but they grow year by year, not like the oak, but like some tree of the garden, which, in spite of its delicacy, may be of more worth than all its stronger neighbors. Children sit under its shade, and gather from its branches the most precious fruits. It is a kind of natural goodness. The element of moral growth in such a person is not a rightly directed will, but rightly directed affections. Such a character loves, and becomes like what it loves. The will is the mere servant of the love. Such a one is scarce conscious of any intentional goodness, but love stands in the place of will. Without knowing it, it repels temptation, and

throws off the stains of life, and bears trials, and, without knowing it, acquiesces in sacrifices from which the more energetic character shrinks aghast, or to which it entirely succumbs. Paul's virtue was the virtue of the will. The virtue of John was that of love. One might fancy that he never thought of resisting a temptation, and never knew aught of those struggles which give their character to the writings of Paul. He loved his Master, and could die for him, hardly thinking whether it were right or wrong, but only whether it were what would please his Lord. They both reached the same point of fidelity, but by different roads. Which of these characters is highest and best, I know not. They are both good. Each is good of its kind, but they are different, and not to be compared. Each may be the true perfection of him who possesses it. Each may attain to the same loyalty to heaven. And so I might describe other forms of character. It is a wretched mistake, this attempt to shape all persons on one model, and by our artificial rules, to break down the natural differences, not of principle, but of form, with which

God intended to have this human world diversified.

Now, what I would urge is this.—Do not be discouraged because you cannot have the same type of character which another may have. You may not have the energetic, enterprising virtues of one man, you may be quite incapable of the hardihood or stoical insensibility under trial of another man. Probably you were not intended to be so. You were intended to serve God in another way. Be satisfied with being faithful, only be faithful in accordance with that nature which God has given you. I offer no apology for unfaithfulness, but what I say is, if you are faithful, do not be discouraged because the superficial form which your fidelity takes is not the same with that of your neighbors. It is better for them, and better for you, that you are unlike.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Often, doubtless, many frivolous or irreverent or preoccupied hearts enter the sanctuary, and leave it, without profit. But when I pass

by these churches, silent and unobtrusive though they be, built up and standing from year to year amidst this busy mart, surrounded by places of traffic, by all worldly excitements, and by too many centres of moral corruption, in crowded streets from which the towering warehouses almost shut out the light of the sky and all the blessed influences of nature, and when I remember how many good thoughts have had their origin in those places of worship, how many passions have there been calmed, how many have there learned to look with more kindness on their neighbors, to judge more justly of life and its interests, and to think more reverently of God, how many sorrows have there been soothed, how many floundering good purposes revived, how many truths more seriously meditated, how many hearts made both wiser and better, I say, blessed are they that go up to worship in the temple of our God. It is a place of good influences, and well may we say, as they of old,—“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors; and be ye thrown open, O our hearts, that the King of Glory may come in!”

CHRISTMAS.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD.

COLLECT.

Almighty God, who hast given us thine only begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a virgin; grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit. And this we beg in the name of Jesus Christ, through whom we ascribe unto Thee all honor and glory, now and ever. Amen.

THE OBSERVANCE OF CHRISTMAS.

WE are apt to speak as if all we learned came from the voice of man or the written word. But it is not so. Days, seasons, commemorative offices, often teach more than the words on the printed page. If we observe it as we ought, this day should impress on us the holiest lessons of religion; for of what does it speak? Number over your chief blessings in heart or hope, in home or society, and there is not one, of which you must not say, for all that is best in this, for all that crowns and glorifies it, we are indebted to the coming of Christ. Then think of the wide and beneficent power which has spread from him over the world. Think of the sins which he has checked. Think of the penitence in so many frail hearts which he has awakened. Think of the myriads of young children, from whom Jesus Christ has

driven away the phantom forms of evil, and into whose opening and innocent minds he has put blessed thoughts of God. Think of the aged, to whom he has given peace. Think of the affections which, in millions of homes, he has either awakened, or has hallowed, and by hallowing them, given to them an immortal life. Think of the heroic purposes which date back to him. Think of the forbearing and forgiving thoughts which his example compels the worst of us to honor, even if we do not imitate. Think of the new order of the world which begun with him, of the higher sense of responsibility, of the more humane sentiments breathed into the relations of men, of the better progress which his religion first inspires, and then guides; and acknowledge that the day of his coming was the central day of human history. I would find a symbol of its universal power for good in its simplest manifestations. The day returns to us amidst the cold and frost and snows of winter, when nature lies weary and dead, and yet, while the winter storms beat on the windows, if within the dwelling there be those affections which Christ came to awaken,

there is joy and gladness, and a psalm of thanksgiving that rises above the clouds. In how many homes, on this cold and wintry earth, does Christ this day light up the very summer time of the affections.

THE SONG OF THE ANGELS.

A SERMON FOR CHRISTMAS.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. *Luke ii. 13, 14.*

WHAT we have most to fear in the religious observance of this day is, that it should come to be a mere perfunctory and formal observance. It is good that it should be observed as a holiday, a season for the meeting of families, of kindred and friends, a day made bright by the happy faces of children, by mutual offices of kindness, by ministries to the poor and the wretched, by deeds and by enjoyments which bind the children of men together in pleasant

bonds. All this is well. These warmer affections shall make a summer of the heart through this wintry season. All this is well; but it is not the first thing. The day is first of all a religious day, and, what is more, its social and domestic benefits are dependent on its being observed as a religious day. Without this, for a time a failing twilight of good influences might remain; but let it be entirely dis severed from religious associations and memories, and those friendly and family benefits for which we value it, would nearly all disappear. It seems as if there were something in our nature which rendered it necessary that even our pleasures, in order that they may be healthful to the affections, should in some way or other be rooted in religion. The friendships of men, as they become close and true, in their intimacies and confidences, rise up into the region of religion, and an hour's communion and confidence, hallowed by religion, has brought them nearer to each other than years of pleasure without it. It is not merely the enjoyments of home which have most endeared it, but the memory of enjoyments, blended with religious emotions.

The family brought together on the Sabbath evening, the influences of the day still lingering about the minds of all, the hours spent by children around a mother's knee, the twilight made musical by the blending of gentle and loving voices, running unconsciously through the whole diapason of human experience from infant pleasures up to immortal faith, till earth and heaven come near together in this sweet anthem of the affections,—it is to pleasures like these that men look back, as the ones which bind them most closely to their homes and their kindred. I know not how it is; but pleasures which are thoroughly dissociated from religion, pleasures conceived and enjoyed, I mean, in a spirit alien to religion, in the same degree seem to become earthly and selfish, and to do more to provoke jealous rivalries than to unite in self-denying love. 'Take the element of religious faith out of men's minds, and their pleasures would be the worst source of selfishness, debasement, and strife. It is the presence of these great moral ideas above us, which, though we may be heedless of it, gives dignity and joy and beauty to the pleasures of this mortal life,

just as it is to the sun in the heavens that we owe the beauty of this earthly scene, the color and the form, the light and the shade, the glory kindling from cloud to cloud, which heralds the morning, and the fading splendors of the sinking day.

If we regarded then this day only as a season for home and kindred and social enjoyments, it must be a religious day. Let all cease to observe it as a religious day, let the churches be closed, and the bells sleep in their towers, and the atmosphere be dispossessed of those religious thoughts which float in it and are breathed by those who do not acknowledge it, and the day itself would soon cease to be observed. It would be delivered over to the sovereignty of mammon, or would be a day of pleasures, whose return all wise men would fear.

And yet, to make it a religious day, it is not enough to say that it shall be set apart as such. It can be made so, not by an outward form alone, but by having in our minds a profound and living sense of the benefits which it commemorates. And here lies our great difficulty. We are accustomed to the idea of Christ's mis-

sion as we are to the rising of the sun, and yielding to the benumbing power of custom, they both cease to awaken that wonder and awe and gratitude which it would seem they must awaken. Then we look at Christ's mission and mediation entirely from this our human side. We look up as men do at a cloud, whose dark and meaningless folds shut down upon the earth, and shut out the light above. We look at it as a fact in history, we enclose it within our dry logical formulas, we narrow it down within the circle of our small earthly conceptions. We treat it as an event in human annals, and forget that it was the great manifestation of God.

Men were not the only beings concerned in that event which we commemorate. There were thoughts in heaven, which, like sunbeams, sought the earth. It was not that the earth held a larger place in the Creator's regards than any other part of his works, but then and there He saw fit to reveal himself in a more glorious way to man. Men were not the only beings concerned in that event. The Almighty Providence, throned in inaccessible peace, was moved

with compassion. The angels bowed with devout gratitude before that love which stooped from heaven to seek out the guilty upon the earth.

The sublimity of that great poem which treats "of man's first disobedience," lies not in its mere descriptions of earth, or heaven, or hell, but that He, whose mortal eyes the "clouds and ever-during dark surrounded," his "mind, through all her powers irradiate," rose above our earthly conceptions, and saw in the mission of Christ, not merely a fact in human history, but a manifestation of the Almighty Providence—God moved to rescue man—the great heavens above us and around us holding in their sympathies the feeble creatures of the earth! Amidst the hierarchy of heavenly powers, the God of all looks for one who shall descend, and through mortal suffering rescue man from guilt and peril.

"Say, heavenly powers, where shall we find such love?

Which of ye will be mortal to redeem

Man's mortal crime, and just th' unjust to save?

Dwells in all heaven charity so dear?

He asked, but all the heavenly choirs stood mute,

And silence was in heaven."

And then, one, he who was nearest the Father's throne, stood forth ready to perform the mission of love. And when his words were ended,

“ His meek aspect
Silent yet spake, and breathed immortal love
To mortal men, above which only shone
Filial obedience ; as a sacrifice
Glad to be offered, he attends the will
Of his great Father.”

As they beheld this offering of himself,

“ All
The multitude of angels, with a shout
Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
As from blest voices, uttering joy, heaven rung
With jubilee, and loud hosannas filled
The eternal regions.”

More sublime than this, from its very simplicity, is the narrative of the Evangelist. On that night Judea slept as the world now sleeps, heedless of the heavenly influences which overhang the children of men. The innocent slept, the toilworn slept, guilt slept within its concealments ; half seen by its failing watch-fires, war slept, dim-tented in the dark. “ At that time

there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." The echoes of that song have floated down through the intervening ages to us. May we dare to lift up our minds to the height of its great argument? There was joy among the blessed spirits of heaven. What the wisest of the earth so little understood, was seen by them in its true magnitude. And how was this event regarded by them? Borne through the universe the angels saw this dark orb made more dark by human sin and wretchedness. They saw beings who had ceased to deserve the Creator's favor, and yet they saw the infi-

nite Love put forth to bless the thankless and undeserving. It was not upon the human side of this event that they chiefly looked ; but they saw in it a manifestation of the mercy and compassion and love of Him who is over all, a shining forth of love on this dark earth, and their song fitly began with God. "Glory to God in the highest," glory to Him who hath compassion on man, glory to Him who sendeth One to lead man into the ways of peace and love.

What the earth then was—and what it is—the ignorance, the moral debasement of its inhabitants—the spiritual darkness that rested on the children of men, we know well enough. This narrative lifts up our thoughts, and seems to give us a glimpse of the way in which the earth is regarded by the inhabitants of a holier sphere. We feel for the moment that there are other spectators than those our mortal eyes look upon. And seeing how they regarded the coming of the Saviour to this world, most miserable because unconscious of its needs, we seem to have a more just view of the true meaning of his mission. Who shall wonder that the descent of the mercy of heaven was

heralded by the song of angels. What wonder that when the brightest manifestation of heaven was revealed, some attendant glories, like the splendors of the rising sun, waited on His coming.

Beings of a higher world looked down upon the Saviour's coming. They beheld his ministry of love, and in the hour of his agony they were at his side. Can we doubt that they still regard with interest those whom he strove to bless? What then shall be the judgment of heaven on the deeds witnessed upon the earth? How to heavenly eyes appear the wars and fightings which mock the mercy of Heaven—the armies sending terror before, and leaving behind a trail of blood and desolation—the oppressions which make the earth groan—the fetters which the love of gain and the love of power rivet on the weak—the sins which reign in the world and take up their abode in the heart? They sang of peace and good-will. Still they behold with joy all signs of the progress of the Saviour's kingdom. When charity seeks out the wretched, they walk unseen by her side. When justice and mercy would raise

men from their wretchedness, there are holy witnesses of their labors. In the home, where gentle affections bind the living together, and a holy faith binds all to the infinite Father, with the hymn of these united hearts blends the song of the angels.

Nor has that manifestation of God's love been powerless. It introduced a new element of moral life into the world. From that high elevation have flowed down into the valley of human life faiths and sentiments, whose origin is higher than the speculations of our minds. The world is different and is better in its thoughts, beliefs, affections, and actions because Christ lived in it. The dawn has risen slowly and has been obscured by clouds and storms. But it is the dawn, and it brightens onward towards the day.

The significance of the event which we commemorate, lies in the fact especially that it is a manifestation of God, that in the coming of Christ, God's mercy and love were revealed as no words could reveal them to the children of men, and as such it meets our great spiritual needs. What is our great spiritual want? Is

it not precisely this—the want of any prevailing sense of the overruling Providence and love of God? We are unconscious how we shut ourselves up to the earth. Like drops in a stream, like ships sailing on parallel lines at sea, we move together, and are hardly aware that we move at all. The objects which occupy us, the interests which engross us, are of the earth. Our habits of thought, our science, our history of the past, our plans for the future, our ambitions and vanities and anxieties are closed in and bounded by a narrow earthly horizon. We become so low and confined in our conceptions, so Chinese in spirit, that of all the universe, the day and the spot where we live, and the interests of the passing time, become to us all in all. Our worldly wisdom is permitted to be our degradation. After science has abjured such errors, we bring down into our moral conceptions the idea of those astronomers who made the earth the centre of the universe. And thus often what passes for skepticism is not the result of any process of logic, but a fading from the mind, as a prevailing power and presence, of the idea of God.

And here we may see the mercy of God, in making these visible manifestations of himself. We are told, that if we have moral truth communicated to us, it matters not as to its source, that the teachings of the gospel are just as valuable without as with that atmosphere of miracle in which they are enveloped. It is a mistake founded on an entire misconception of the wants of man. It is not that truth would be less true, or that miracle proves a truth, but that the miracle is itself a revelation of a truth of the highest magnitude. We need the miracle, not to prove some unrelated proposition, but for the truth which itself directly teaches. Shut up in this world, becoming unmindful of what is above us, the first of all human needs is, to be aroused from this earthly sleep, to be made conscious that there is a power above us, on whom we depend, and whom we are bound to obey. To meet this great need, from time to time, God has revealed himself, not through phrases intelligible to the wise, but in a way intelligible to all, and commanding the attention of all. We need not only to have the truth revealed, but revealed in a way that shall com-

mand attention. It is as in other things. While the electric fluid moves evenly and equally, though it fill earth and heaven, and be the element of life, we hardly observe it. But let it roll in thunder over the clouds, or leap in lightnings across the gulfs between, and the world looks and listens. The mode of manifestation commands attention. So God has revealed himself not only through his ordinary Providence, but in other ways so as to command our thoughts. As if for a moment the veil of the Temple had been rent, he has broken through that order of the world, behind which he withdraws himself from human gaze, and has revealed himself in front of his works, revealed himself the God of that order and the God of all.

Thus the greatest truth in the gospel is taught through miracle itself. The mere fact of one such interposition is a revelation, such as could in no other way be made of the Divine providence and love. And the greatest of all miracles is the sending of his Son. Well might the angels, who rejoice over a single sinner that repents, look on this great event

with joy and thanksgiving. . I would not forget one of those miracles, which, to human eyes, have brought earth and heaven nearer together. On this guilty earth, covered with wrong and ravage and blood, we will remember that there are some spots which have been hallowed by a heavenly presence, some mountain summits, around which still lingers the radiance of a Divine manifestation. Let them stand forever, silent witnesses that God has not forsaken the earth. Let this day remain forever a remembrancer of Divine love.

To-day we, my friends, leave this place for comfortable homes, for tables crowned with the blessings of God's providence, for family gatherings where the affections find a genial climate, and where they may freely put forth without fear of defeat or blight. The morning has been ushered in by welcoming good wishes, and the night will go out amidst domestic rejoicings. Nor ought it to be otherwise. Enjoy God's gifts, and be thankful while you enjoy. Make a summer for the heart in this winter of the year. But while we are in this place, let us pause on the memorials and the truths which

shall hallow these enjoyments. Let it not be your guilt to receive with a grasping hand, to enjoy with a thankless heart. As you look around your homes, consider how much of all that is best there you owe to His coming whom we this day commemorate. The home does not consist of the hearth-stone and of the walls ; but the affections which bind its inmates together, the self-denying spirit with which they help each other to bear the trials of life, the gentle and loving sympathies, the united hopes, these make the home. And what evils which threaten these would not Christianity restrain and hinder, and what one of these blessings does it not crown with a new light ? The affections themselves—it has transformed them from mere instincts, and imbued them with an immortal element. A Christian home is a new creation on the earth. Take out of it all that Christ has done for its affections, its principles, and its hopes, and though all its luxuries might remain, what a dreary poverty would be left behind ! This day, as you look on your little children, it is your privilege to remember Him who when on earth blessed such little ones as these, and

who teaches you that they are not forgotten, but that their angels behold the face of our Father in heaven. Some of your number this day will be absent upon the seas, in foreign lands, amidst perils where your protection cannot reach ; but your mutual thoughts, traversing the globe, shall meet and cross each other. You will utter the same prayers, and you know that the Providence which is over you is over them. And that you can thus think, you owe to Jesus Christ. There are those in your homes, it may be, bowed down with infirmity and sickness. It may be the last time they shall join with you in these grateful rejoicings ; but they still can rejoice with you and you with them ; for they and you through Christ have hopes which reach beyond the grave. There are vacant places which cannot be filled, and voices which none else may hear, but whose loving tones you will never cease to hear sounding through the lonely chambers of the heart. But you are permitted to hear also another voice. As in imagination you visit the grave, that voice comes to you which has come to myriads of mourners, saying, I am the Resur-

rection and the Life. As you think of these things while you are enjoying the blessings of your earthly lot, your thoughts cannot fail to rise in thanksgivings to Him who has poured in the light of a heavenly hope upon this mortal lot. And while you give thanks for what you enjoy, let the thanksgiving of the heart become the mercy of the hand. Honor Christ's coming, not by mere words, but by merciful deeds. Let some poor person be less wretched, some lonely person less solitary this day because of you. Spread not the feast for your rich neighbors only, but let those whom the world forgets be remembered. Honor the day by kind acts and merciful thoughts. Honor it by the forgiving of enemies, by the removing of causes of alienation, and strife, and unkindness. Honor it by whatever promotes peace, and kind judgments, and friendly bonds between God's children. Honor it by those deeds which show that it is not in words alone, but in spirit and in truth that you join in the angels' song of Glory to God, and good-will among men. Let the reign of love and peace and good-will be established in your hearts and in your homes.

A CHRISTMAS EXHORTATION.

To-day is a day of thanksgiving for the greatest of God's gifts. Let it not be observed as a day of selfish thanksgiving. Above all other days should it make you practically kind, merciful, and beneficent. Let kind thoughts and deeds on your part show that you strive to appreciate God's kindness to you. When your home this night is lighted up, and, richer than all other music, the air is full of the blending harmonies of children's voices, and when with those whom you most love you share all that most blesses you, be able to remember that during the day you have made some other home happier, that some other dwelling, which, in its poverty, but for you, would have been more wintry, because of the surrounding joy, is made as cheerful and light as yours, through your kindness. You know, for who does not know, some sick person, this day shut up in a lonely chamber, and enduring the sad monotony of

pain. You know some person, young or old, who has few friends, who is very likely to be forgotten and neglected. You know some sad home this day made more sad by the memory of the past. While you forget not your prosperous neighbors, first of all, and before you sit down to your loaded tables or meet under the lighted evening lamps, remember these poor, or sick, or sorrowing, or neglected ones, who have not many friends to think of them. Make it a day of pleasure for those whom you love, but let not the day which commemorates Him who gave his life for you be turned into a mockery, by being made a day of selfish pleasure. Hallow its enjoyments by kind offices, and by kind offices to those who need them, and above all, let them be hallowed by the thought of God. We meet this day in a common worship. It is well so to do. Our very pleasures take their best grace from religion, and unless associated with religion,—unless brought within the circle of its expanding light, turn into ministrations of vanity and selfishness. Thus, in all that you enjoy yourselves, remember Him who hath given the power to enjoy; and when the night

closes round you, and silence is in the streets and in your homes, be able to remember that this day you have endeavored to make others happier ; and as you begin it with social worship, let your last thoughts before you sleep be of that all-merciful Providence, who watches over your slumbers, who leads you through the peaceful night to the light of a new day, and who shall lead those who trust in Him through the night of death to the everlasting life.

THE NEW YEAR.

There is a kind of geology of life. We live through successive strata of experiences, and each new stage is attended by the development of energies which before were latent, and on whose right direction and control the prospects of life depend. From time to time life is revolutionized by a new element. The new experience makes us different beings. We are disjoined from the past. It is almost like death as we pass from one stage to another. Here is an opportunity provided by God for a beginning of a right life. He awakens the heart, arouses the conscience, compels us to think, does all that can be done for free beings, but the choice of what we will do depends upon ourselves. Do you stand at one of these eras? Suffer not the blessed hour of heaven to go by. Choose seriously the way of life. Let your resolves be fixed in your own soul, and be fortified and hallowed by prayer that each stage of life may be a step upward, and the whole of life a preparation for the more blessed life which shall hereafter be revealed.

THE NEW YEAR.

IF there be any one who is conscious that his life, as a responsible creature of God, is not what it ought to be—whose virtues are more the virtues of accident than of intention—who heedlessly delays taking that stand on Christian ground which he nevertheless sometimes means to take, let him hallow the New Year—for what better or holier thing can he do?—by a considerate and decided purpose, with God's help, to make his life a Christian life. As with doubtful hands we push away the shades and take our first steps in the opening year, the thought cannot fail to come to us all of how little we know what is before us. That joy may not lose its freshness, nor the foresight of grief crush us before the time, and that faith may not too soon be lost in sight, a merciful Providence does not permit our eyes to penetrate the solemn mysteries of the future. One

thing only we know,—that he walks safely through the shadows, who walks by God's law. Our earthly plans may come to naught—our earthly hopes be blighted—but truth and mercy and pious trust in God shall abide forever. They shall be a light in the dark valley, and the life of man forevermore.

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

A NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS.

LIFE is a journey. The analogy runs out into particulars. On the journey the most of the time is spent in travelling a previously selected road. But at intervals we come to a parting of the ways—ways widely divergent and leading to very different ends—and we must choose which we will take. At one of these landmarks we stand to-day. We do not make it an occasion; already in the order of things it has been made so by Providence.

Why, I know not, and care not to know ; but the hours that mark the closing of one year and the beginning of another, are felt by us all to possess in some way a peculiar and most serious character. We cannot help it. So many thoughts meet at this centre, a year is so large a fragment of life, it is so measured out by the numbered milestones before our eyes, it so speaks and says, thus much longer hast thou lived, and thus much nearer art thou to thy grave,—there are so many memories of those who were with us a year ago, the innocence of childhood, the fair forms of youth, the mature in age, with us a year ago, but whose graves are now covered with these winter snows, and the possibility that we ourselves may have been borne down to that narrow house for all the living before another New Year's Day returns,—there is such a summoning up at this point, of the responsibilities, affections, the hopes and fears of life, that in spite of ourselves it sobers us, and forces us to think. Sad, indeed, would it be, if we could pass through this dark archway of time, out of one year into another, leaving so much behind that cannot be changed,

and entering into such uncertainties in the future, sad would it be if this epoch in our mortal life did not bring with it serious thoughts. Over the land last night, in uncounted homes, following immemorial customs, there were myriads who with young hearts and laughing voices, danced and sung out the parting year. And so let it be. On this earth, so full of untold griefs, it shall not be my office to dim one lamp of innocent joy. Let the gladness of the heart utter itself as the Creator meant it should do. But in all the gay and bright movement of young life, how much of secret misgiving. In that flowing stream of sparkling melodies, what strange undertone is that? Is it a dirge—which, distant and faint—heard and not heard—mingles its low and solemn cadences with all these exulting strains?—Ah! that saddened cadence, the lowest and faintest of all, is heard above all, and is still heard when the lamps of joy are quenched and the music silent. The most youthful, as the evening closed and they sought their chambers alone, were made to feel how serious a thing it is to live. As the bell struck the midnight hour, its strokes falling on

the heart, how rose before them, as if taking a visible form before descending into the tomb of the Past, the events of the departing year. Farewell, how many hearts were saying, farewell, oh parting year! Farewell, dear kindred, whose graves are in your shadows,—farewell seasons given for duty, and which might have been made so bright by my fidelity! Farewell the blessings of God, which have been calling on me for gratitude! Farewell my life, which is parting from me,—farewell, oh hours, which on dark wings are flying upward with your record for eternity!

And those of us who are older, it may be, have had other and sadder thoughts—so many duties neglected, so many opportunities of usefulness disregarded, so little improvement where we most needed it, so much remaining to be done, and only a life so much shorter in which to do it. Happy is he, who looking back a year and remembering the purposes of that season, is able to say that he has been faithful to them. If we could say, during the past year, we have been regardful of the welfare of our friends, and have cherished just and kind

thoughts towards those who imagined themselves to be our enemies ; we have done our part in promoting useful enterprises ; we have endeavored to lighten the pressure of want and of sorrow ; we have resisted our besetting sins ; we have been grateful to God for his blessings while we have enjoyed them ; and in the employments of life have sought to do his will ;—if we could say this with truth, what a fair year were it to look back upon. But however the past may be, it is gone,—and here is the fearful thought. Once past, it remains unchanged. The Departed Year, with its evil and its good, has gone out of our hands. A year ago, it was in our power to make it what we pleased. It is so no longer. Day by day, it has gone past, has become fixed, and changeless, and irreversible—no longer subject to our choice, but only to the Divine judgment.

We stand on the threshold of a new year. We must make our plans as if we were to live through the year, and yet it must be with many reserves and qualifications. For while many shall see the year's end, there are some, we know, who will not see it. Whose name has

on it the mark for the grave, we may not know ; but some of those, we know, who welcomed one another at the beginning, will not be here at the end. And soon all shall be gone, and a new generation fill the places that we have occupied. The few survivors, worn and bent with years, shall alone remain, amidst the solitudes which death has made. How should this fact, which nothing but the madness of folly would try to keep out of sight, change the view we take of life ! What contempt does it throw on our petty wranglings and strifes, our small ambitions and selfish passions !

Could the veil that hides the future be lifted, could we know that we should not see the end of the year on earth, what is there which you are neglecting that ought to be done ? If in the uncertainties of life there is one question above all others at this season which a reasonable man should ask himself, it is this—What is there which you are neglecting to which you ought to attend ? It is wonderful that this great fact, the uncertainty of life, influences us so little. Doubtless it sometimes throws a darker thought into the mind, it gives an attractive

sadness to poetry, it awakens a transient feeling, and prompts a transient resolve, it may affect the character and methods of one's business life. But how little influence has it over our more settled moral and religious purposes. And yet we have definite convictions in regard to the future. We believe that for the heavenly happiness there must be some preparation of life and of character. What then shall we say of one who knows that any day he may be called from this scene, and does not often ask himself, "How far does this course which I am pursuing prepare me for that which death will so soon reveal?"

Living, but living an uncertain life, let the season utter its warnings. One thing is certain, that if you desire improvement in any thing, it will never come to you accidentally. It must begin in a distinct, resolved purpose to make a change for the better;—and this is a proper season to be devoted to consideration and to Christian resolutions. I call on you to give this day to a serious review of your life, of what you have been living for, and of what you propose henceforth to live for. Give one day

to this. And let it be this first day of the year ; at least begin the year aright. Here you stand at the parting of the ways, some road you are to take, and as you stand here consider and know how it is that you intend to live. As you review the past, there are many positive evils which you know ought to be left behind. Carry no bad habits, no corrupting associations, no enmities and strifes, into this new year. Leave these behind, and let the dead Past bury its dead ;—leave them behind, and thank God that you are able to leave them.

The new year will bring its opportunities of usefulness. Consider whether you mean to meet them as a Christian man should, or whether you mean to avoid them. I do not say what you shall do, only do not go on blindfold ;—know for yourself whether you mean to meet or avoid the opportunities of usefulness which Providence puts in your way. You have temptations, known if to no other, at any rate to yourself. At least, this day look at them face to face, and know what they are, and know whether you mean to yield or not to yield to them. You have duties connecting you with

kindred, and friends, and society. Give this day to a consideration of what they are. Is this requiring too much? How many men are there, who pass for men of wisdom and prudence, who do not leave matters of profit or ambition to accident, who will not let the new year go by without knowing how their affairs stand with the world, but who do not, from one year's end to the other, make one serious and thorough examination into the merits of their lives. At least give this one day to a review of the past and to a consideration of the way in which you are willing to live for the future—the way by which, living or dying, you are willing to abide.

At this parting of the ways there is one of them in which a Christian man should go. Are you prepared to say, that road which I know a Christian should take, I choose. I take it humbly, for I know my weakness; but I take it deliberately, meaning, with God's help, to continue in it to the year's end. Are you prepared to say that? Is not that what we ought deliberately to say? Is not that religious purpose the one to which the year should bring us all?

I prescribe no special rules of life ; the one point on which I would fix attention is this : If you are ever to make any change for the better, that change must begin in some decided purpose of your own. You cannot expect God's help, except in aid of some such purpose. And because of its necessity, devote this day to a review of the past, and to Christian purposes for the future.

The new year is ushered in with mutual good wishes. Let the good wishes turn into acts ; let no friendly ties, broken fast enough by death, be lightly broken by you. Let no hard thing be done even towards an enemy—let those around you be the happier because you are in the midst of them—let the daily gifts of Heaven's mercy, which are yours, cherish a perpetual gratitude to Him, who giveth all ; and, not knowing what a day may bring forth, not knowing which of your rivals or your friends, which of those associated with you or dependent on you, which of the wretched whom you might relieve, or of the friendless whom you might benefit, may be taken away before the year's end, be careful that whatever works

are required by justice, or mercy, or religion, be done while you are able to do them. Put them not off till their death or yours makes them impossible ; and let the new year which comes in with rejoicings be hallowed by Christian fidelity.

RELIGIOUS DECISION.

Into what a solemn day does the dawn open, when a young person becomes conscious that the true happiness of life is to be found, not in its amusements, nor in its ambitions or successes, but in usefulness, and self-denial, and virtuous endeavors, and a pious trust in God. There are few who do not early learn, whether they practise what they learn or not, that no pleasures ever will satisfy, which do not call into exercise the higher qualities of the character. Then comes upon the mind that which sobers life, the feeling of responsibility. Then dawns on it in broader light the majestic and awful idea of God. We are embosomed in fearful mysteries. We stand related to that which is highest and greatest in the universe, and though

we may be frivolous, we become conscious that life is not frivolous, but most serious and in earnest. And then too, trailing its dread shadow across the skies, comes over us the idea of death. One companion after another is taken away, till we almost look into the open gates of eternity. In a few years we must pass the dread boundary. What is there beyond? The eye sees not, the mind falls back appalled from before the clouded mystery. We can hear the beating of the surf, the faint murmur of the sea, on whose dark waters we must soon embark. But what doom is beyond, who shall declare? We feel that our hope in that untrodden eternity must depend on having wills and inclinations submitted to the will of Him who is over all. Whatever is best in the human heart, and grandest in human relations, and most awful in human destiny, declares the necessity of the Christian heart and life.

ETERNITY.

No point can be arrived at where it stops. We may accumulate years together. We might

trace back the past by its great men and its great deeds, by its generations, revolutions, and epochs, even to the creation of man. During this time what scenes have been acted; how many human hearts have beat; how many virtues and how many crimes thrown alternate sunshine and eclipse over the world! Yet what is all this interval of time to eternity? But a point in infinite space!—a solitary stroke of a midnight bell, sounding once and no more in the void abyss of endless ages.

THE EPIPHANY.

COLLECT.

O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only begotten Son to the Gentiles : mercifully grant, that we who know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPIPHANY.

CHRIST THE DESIRE OF ALL.

A SERMON FOR EPIPHANY.

And the desire of all nations shall come. *Haggai* ii. 7.

THIS day is set apart to commemorate the manifestation of Christ. Of the star in the East, of the shepherds who heard the angels' song, of the wise men who laid their gifts at the feet of the infant Saviour, we know nothing beyond what is written. The Saviour's coming was first proclaimed to the shepherds. He was first welcomed by the wise men. But his kingdom was only slowly established in the world. In these different classes of men, and in the ready or hesitating way in which they received Christianity we find an illustration of those states of

mind which prepare men for the reception of Christ, and which serve to explain some of the great problems both of belief and unbelief.

In the shepherds who listened believingly to the angelic anthem, I see a type of the pre-ordained affinities between religious truth and the simple and unperverted heart. Where has Christianity found readiest acceptance? Not among the wise or the ignorant as such, but among those whose minds have preserved most of their natural simplicity. In the throng of cities, one is hardly surprised to find any degree of religious unbelief. It is not because men reason more or less, but because the great instincts, which impel men to seek religious truth, are crowded aside and silenced in the pressure and fever of this artificial existence. Among natural scenes, because man's nature there seems more easily to maintain its simplicity, and because these instincts are brought more into the immediate presence of God's manifestations, the same infidelity seems a ghastly and monstrous intrusion. Where is the empire of religion? Not in courts and camps as such, nor among the mountains or the valleys, but wher-

ever hearts preserve their simplicity, wherever the original nature of man is not overlaid by secondary passions, there is the empire of religious faith. She passes by the gates of the proud, and enters a gracious and welcomed guest into the dwellings of the humble and pure. She finds ready adherents among those whom we may suppose these shepherds to represent. Christ is the desire of the simple heart. His truth answers its mysterious questions, solves its perplexities, and gives meaning to its sublimest aspirations. It is recognized and embraced, because it is felt that it meets the holiest desires of the soul.

But not the shepherds only; the sages of the East welcomed the Saviour. And in this I see an illustration of another truth, which is, if men's natures are not perverted by vice, if these natural instincts are not deadened, the advance of intelligence makes the need of higher light, of the light of revelation, more deeply felt. Just as mind and heart are developed, the great questions relating to God, to futurity, and to human destiny, assume a more solemn interest. So long as the moral nature

is not imbruted and subverted, we need not fear that increasing intelligence will endanger religious faith. It only makes the necessity of it more felt, by causing these great questions to press with heavier burden on the soul. The brute has no foresight even of death ; the brutish man has little forethought. His mind does not rise up into the region of religious ideas. The Australian savage, prowling amidst his marshes, is little disturbed by those questions which take hold on the invisible. But to Socrates and to Plato, these questions are invested with a momentous interest, compared with which all others are insignificant and trifling. And such were they to the men in ancient times, who devoted their lives to searching for truth ; who sought it from the oracles of their gods, from the silent heavens, from the grave, and in sad explorations of their own hearts. These were the men, not the base and the sordid, but the wise and good, who cried out for light, and implored the heavens that some divine voice might speak to the blind and struggling heart of man. Such spiritual wants, more even than the visible star, led the eastern sages

to the feet of Christ. It was the homage of science to religion,—a confession of the need in which reason stands of revelation.

These instinctive cravings for light lead men to the Saviour. The first disciples were disciples before miracles were wrought. As they sat at the receipt of custom, or on the shores of the Galilean lake, the Saviour said to them, Follow Me,—and there were such marks of divinity in his words and presence, that they arose and left all, and followed him. Were Christianity to appear now for the first time and say, follow thou me, where would the men be found, who, thus recognizing the divine lineaments of truth, would leave all for its service? Not the base-minded, not those with thoughts fastened to the earth, not those absorbed by worldly ambitions and satisfied with material pleasures, but the pure and unselfish, the simple-hearted and just, and piously-disposed. And why? Because to receive truth requires a condition of mind suited to receive it. Scientific truth is seen to be such readily only by scientific minds. Moral truth requires a moral condition as a preparation to receive it. Those who first

embraced Christianity must have had this preparation. Simple and noble minds, with infinite defects doubtless, but simple, and loving truth, they welcomed it as the eye welcomes the morning light. And it explains another fact. They who embraced Christianity with one hand held their life in the other. None but heroic natures in such emergencies come forward cheerfully to be the forlorn hope in the world's advance. As in all great emergencies, noble natures are tempted out by the very dangers of the exigency. But in the case of Christianity, there was the union of both—the sublimest truth winning to its standard simple, unselfish, and truth-loving minds,—truth, scorned, persecuted, endangered attracting to its service heroic minds. And thus it was, that the early age of Christianity was an age of martyrs—that thousands like the Apostles came forward, holding life as nothing in this great cause of God.

But all men were not simple-minded or truth-loving; and on this very account their need of the guidance and restraint of religion was all the greater. They were not prepared to recognize the divine lineaments of Chris-

tianity. They needed that it should come with authority; therefore it came, through God's mercy, in a form suited to the needs, if not to the desires of the world,—came in the clouds of heaven—came in the form of the Son of God—came heralded and accompanied and witnessed and glorified by miracle—came a visible manifestation of the condescension and mercy of the Almighty Providence. Thus alike, in its nature and in its form, it met in its manifestation the needs of the world.

But it was not then alone that Christ met the needs of mankind. He alone, now as then, has power to meet and satisfy the desires of the nations. This weary and heavy-laden world, burdened with cares and sorrows and fears,—what shall bring relief and comfort? The world has made great advances in whatever constitutes a material civilization, but it does not grow happier simply because it grows richer and wiser and more prosperous. The very excitement of mind which produces these results, only enlarges the horizon of our desires, and makes them more craving and insatiable. At this moment, throughout Christendom, there is

a restless agitation, and a craving for some perfect form of society which shall establish a kingdom of God on earth, and restore the lost Eden, and give contentment to all human hearts. But it is in vain. No institutions, which leave the heart unchanged, can satisfy the desires of the world. To expect it, is to misapprehend the purpose of our mortal existence. Man is not here for enjoyment, but for virtue. The more this immediate enjoyment is made the great end of thought and exertion, the more certainly is the wish of man defeated. This very craving for happiness, if it find satisfaction at all, must find it not chiefly in institutions, but in a faith which inspires the mind with more exalted hopes, brings it under the control of higher motives, and, in the power which it gives to sacrifice the world, raises it above the world.

Christ is the desire of the weak, the sinful, and the penitent. For through him alone comes the assurance of God's mercy, and help, and forgiveness. The guilty world, disturbed by misgivings, tortured by remorse, from its depths of self-abasement, looks up to the Redeemer.

There is sorrow on the earth, and it enters

daily into all our homes. And what can the world do for mourning hearts? It stands by the grave's mouth with the inverted torch. It points not upward like the angel of the resurrection, but downward into the darkness. It can say, it is useless to grieve. It can say, wait for time, the consoler. It may drug sorrow with opiates, but it is quite another power, which, while it keeps open the tenderness of the heart, infuses into it the balsam of an immortal hope. Sorrow and trial find their true guidance in Him alone who passed through Gethsemane and from the cross to heaven; and the dying have hope only in Him who is the resurrection and the life.

The angels' song is no longer heard, and the star which guided the wise men is faded from the sky. But the instincts which impelled the shepherds and the sages to give heed to heavenly manifestations still remain. While instead of the vanished star, from that far distance, through all the dark experiences of intervening ages, shines an ever-increasing spiritual light to guide our steps. And the same instincts which taught the humble and the wise to look to

Christ, are prompting us to lay our wills and our hearts at the feet of the Saviour and Redeemer.

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

COLLECT.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing which thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; create and make in us new and contrite hearts; that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD LEADING US TO REPENTANCE.

“NOT knowing that the goodness of God leadeth men to repentance.” So do the Scriptures speak of repentance. In them it is nothing of gloom, or arbitrary exaction. It is an act illumined with the highest and most glorious hopes. Their language is, Repent ye, for the Kingdom of *Heaven* is at hand. It is leaving behind all things base and bad and degrading, and ascending into the light. God smiles upon it; the angels rejoice over it; the earth is blessed by it.

The opportunity and ability to repent, is one of the highest privileges that God has granted to man. Let decay commence at the heart of the oak, the tree has no self-restoring power, but must go on decaying till it falls. The temple whose foundations begin to crumble cannot restore itself, but, faster or slower, will crumble

till it sinks in the dust. Bird and beast, could they wander from their instincts, know not how to correct their errors. But to man, within certain limits, and to man alone, Almighty God has seen fit to give the power of self-recovery. If moral decay touch his heart, and the innocence of childhood be gone, and sin have darkened his way and his bosom, still all hope is not gone. There is still a power at the centre to resist evil. And through its exertion, difficult though it may be, he may be raised from the darkness and the night into the day. Is the use of this power—is repentance, to be spoken of as a thing of gloom? No: for the possession of it, so frail and sinful as we are, we ought to give loudest thanks. What were we without the power of repentance? 'Take not the most corrupt and vile, but take him who shall rank among the good. Were the wrong feelings that have insinuated themselves unheeded, like an untimely frost, into his bosom,—were the unworthy prejudices he has thoughtlessly adopted,—were his interests and affections too often fixed on improper ends—were these to remain forever—were there no escape from evil after it

once entered his bosom—*i. e.*, were there no possibility of repentance,—all the future to the frail children of earth would be a desert. There have been those who in a peculiar and literal way, have believed that man must reap as he has sown—that whatever passion or principle he allows to get dominion over him in this world, will keep its sovereignty forever, and that eternity will be spent in laboring in obedience to it. No matter what the satiety, the disgust, or the remorse, still they must toil on for the same ends that they have sought here, and the doom pronounced over them is, forever and forever. Now let this doom be stamped, not on the end, but on the beginning of life, so that he who had once begun to go wrong must by an inexorable fate go on wrong forever,—let there be no restoration, no recovery, no repentance,—and we should, with bended knees, wear out the very footstool of Heaven in prayers to be permitted to repent. We should not then speak of the difficulty of repentance—we should implore God, as for an immeasurable good, to be allowed at every cost and difficulty to repent.

Do not look then, on the command of God

to repent as a hard and exacting one. It is our chief privilege. Let him who has wronged another thank God that he is able to repair the wrong. Let him who has indulged unworthy passions thank God for the time and opportunity to rescue himself from their tyranny. Let him whose life has been unprofitable to man, and in the sight of God, rejoice that he is permitted to turn, and fill up his remaining days with greater usefulness. Let not man cling to evil, as if it were good, and sink with it into the quicksand, but rejoice and be grateful that he may rise out of corruption and stand on the solid ground, a free man. Repentance is escape from otherwise hopeless peril. There is no one but sins, and without the power of repentance sin would bring despair. Repentance rescues the man from sin to holiness, from earth to heaven. It takes him from the sympathies of the bad indeed, but it is to raise him to the society of the good—to the sympathy of all pure spirits, to the companionship of angels—yes, of angels; for they look on and rejoice over but one sinner who repenteth.

The goodness of God leadeth us to repen-

tance. But do not therefore think it an unimportant thing. Its necessity is seen when we consider that it is the essential, absolute condition of all true peace in this life. For what is wanting here to satisfy the worn and weary heart of man? It is not more or less success in the affairs of the world. It is a heart at peace with God! It is a heart which, renouncing itself and the dominion of the passions and the world, says, Where God calls I will go; what He bids I will do; his will shall be mine. Give this, and the light that shines on the outward world shall not compare with the light that fills the heart within.

If all this is true of this world, still more imperative and necessary does repentance appear when we look forward to the future. It is little my custom, and least of all a pleasure, to appeal to the terrors of the Lord to persuade men to righteousness. But there are truths of such momentous import, that on them the pulpit must not be silent, and every Christian congregation is bound to ponder them. I pretend not to penetrate into the shades of the future farther than revelation carries our steps. But I

would ask, what prospects in that future world does he set before himself, whose present life is devoted to selfish passions and worldly interests? There is such a thing as a Christian life, and there is a life which is not a Christian one. And these courses are not separated by narrow and indefinite boundaries, but by the controlling principles on which they are built up—by the love of worldly pleasure and advantage on one side, and by the controlling reverence for God and love of man on the other. What is there which he can look forward to in the future without fear, whose whole life has been spent in the neglect of those great principles which Christ has given as the controlling laws of life? Every thing which our Saviour has revealed as the result of such a course is covered with clouds and darkness. He has taught us that after death is the judgment. He has declared that for every word, and for the use of all our talents, we must give account, and that we must reap as we have sown. He has described the results of an evil course under every image which could most appall the heart of man. Through the dreadful cloud shines that sad

light which is only enough to reveal the abode of pain, and remorse, and woe, while from all its gloomy depths a voice resounds, reaching every sinful and heedless heart, and crying, Beware ! Beware ! Eternity calls to the children of men, Repent, that ye may be saved ! We stand on the borders of the eternal world, and before we pass under its shades, a voice from heaven echoing the words, tenderly and solemnly says, Repent !

CHRIST BY HIS HUMILIATION AND
DEATH CALLING MEN TO REPENT-
ANCE.

The cross of Christ is the great awakener of the world's conscience. As I stand at the foot of the cross and yield myself up to the influences of the scene, what are the meditations which naturally suggest themselves ? I call to mind that God has done much for the happiness of man—much to shield him from pain. He built this fair world and filled it with good. He has surrounded man with privileges, and guarded him round about with defences. But

in the course of his providence one thing stands apart from all others. Here, to accomplish some end which we must believe of sufficient magnitude to warrant it, he has broken through the order and laws of nature—he has thrown open the everlasting doors, and his visible power has descended in miracle and wonder to the earth—he has sent his Son—and that Son, dearly beloved, has died on the cross—and this, for what?—what object sufficiently great to warrant this interposition of the heavens on the dark and troubled earth? He has declared the object—it is a single one—to rescue man from sin. Heedless as we may be of it, that is the purpose. What then, my heart asks, must be the danger, and what the guilt of sin, when God thus interposes to save man from it? The magnitude of the evil is seen from the magnitude of the means of rescue. The cross is the most solemn attestation to the guilt and peril of sin. As I look at the cross, I remember that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that the world through him might be saved. And did my sins help to nail the Redeemer to the cross? and can I live, in the

presence of such a spectacle, heedlessly in my sins? I do not pretend to define its varied modes of influence, but no fact can be more certain than that the cross of Christ has been the great awakener of the world's conscience. It has made the thoughtless think—has startled the insensible from their lethargy; and they who were heedless to all other appeals, as the cross and its cause have risen before them, have bowed their heads and smote their breasts, and said, God be merciful to me a sinner.

It reveals in a way not to be set aside, that great truth which the world has sighed and pined to know, the love of God—shows in the most impressive way that it is no exacting despotism, but the love of God, that leads man to repentance. The cross is the appeal of love—God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, and Christ so loved the world that he gave himself to save it. It reveals the tender interest of Heaven in the fate of the poor, misguided, sinful creature of the dust. Threats, penalties may be resisted; who can resist the power of love? An illustration best explains this influence. In the retirement of

the country, a young man grows restless and weary of the restraints that surround him. He falls into evil courses and shrinks from the parental eye, and he would be away, where the counsels of a father and the sad looks of a mother may no more reproach him, and, reckless, he seeks the seas. Far away, in foreign lands, in the concealment of great cities, he delivers himself up to evil companions, and unbridled passions. Years pass, and they who loved him, hear nothing of him. His memory is in their hearts and his name in their prayers, but they can discover, much as they seek, no traces of their guilty and ungrateful child. At length vague stories reach them of him. Returning voyagers have seen him in some distant port, on the other side of the globe, and still others return and their accounts bring anguish and agony to the home he has deserted. His vices are bearing their natural fruit. With no companions but those of guilt—the slave and the victim of evil indulgences—in want and shame and sickness, he is hastening on towards his grave.—In that home is another son, tenderly and dearly beloved, and he says, I will arise and

go to my brother, and if it may be—save him. He embarks, and after long search, discovers him. The lost one, when he first beholds him, would if he could repel him from his sight, for his presence brings back memories which he would gladly forget forever. But he will not be thrust away—he strives to unloose him from his evil entanglements—he provides for his wants—day and night watches by his sick bed, and beholds him restored to health. But in the meantime, catching the infection of a sickly climate, worn down with watching, he himself sickens and dies, a martyr to brotherly affection.

In the silent chamber the guilty one sits and looks on the corpse of the innocent one who has died in his efforts to save him. On the marble features of his brother a look of love still lingers. It seems as if the silent lips moved and were about to speak and say, return, my brother, to the home which is open, and to the wounded hearts that love you.—Come not to this scene, companions of his guilty hours! Leave him alone with the dead! Let an affection stronger than death, speak to him!—His companions cannot mourn with

him, or understand the bitter thoughts, the tender, reproachful memories that rise up in his heart. Alone, through the unheeding streets, he follows him to the grave. And when the earth has filled it, there he remains alone. If he heeded not his brother's living voice, he cannot but hear that voice which speaks from the grave. His heart says, here indeed was love! Thy brother died to save thee.—Who is he that can resist such an appeal? Must it not touch his soul? Though he has repelled warning and reproof, slighted conscience, interest, and every other motive, he cannot resist the power of disinterested love. In the bitterness of shame and remorse, his heart compels him to say, my brother shall not have died in vain. I will leave these guilty ways. I will return to that home I am so unworthy to enter, if it be but in dust and ashes to confess my sins and be rejected from its doors forever. I will encounter any penalty, any reproach, but I will return.

Such, only in an infinitely higher degree, was the ministry of Christ—to recover the wandering, to rescue the lost;—and the language of

his cross is,—Return, return to thy Father's house; come back to thy forsaken home; come back to the ways of peace and the home of love. From that cross, the love of God, who gave his Son to redeem the world, ever speaks. All the love of Heaven concentrates its beams on the cross. The cross was reared by the love of Heaven and the guilt of earth.

REPENT YE.

It is the goodness of God that leadeth men to repentance. If He suffers the evil course to reap its evil fruits, it is that the bitter experience of sin may furnish the correction of sin. And no sooner does the prodigal turn, than God beholds him. He hears the first sigh of penitence. On the wings of his mercy, through holy and sustaining influences, He goes to meet him, while he is yet a great way off. His love has remained the same, and the angels of God rejoice for one who was lost, that he is found; for the dead, that he lives again.

Is there one who has been heedless of his

duty, and whose heart is yet capable of grateful emotions—who remembers the goodness of God, how it watches over him by night and by day, at home and abroad, from the cradle to the grave, who feels the wickedness of ingratitude, and remorse for his course, let him heed the goodness of God, which is calling him to repentance. Let him cast off the sins that beset him, and here, in the silence of his heart, say, I will arise and go to my Father.

And let it not be delayed by those treacherous pleas with which the passions would seduce the conscience. Say not : When the blood of youth is cooled down, I will give up this dangerous pleasure, or curb the passion or appetite to which I now sinfully yield. When I have secured a little more of this world's goods, I will leave this course which my conscience tells me is at least a doubtful one. When business grows less pressing I will think more of the requirements of God. When my selfish ends are all secured, I will think of doing good. On such rocks have uncounted souls been wrecked. But suppose you are not practising a miserable delusion on yourself, suppose that this time of

better purposes and better efforts should ever come,—I ask, what is the nature or worth of the repentance you propose. Will you never give up a sin till you have extracted from it all the gratification or advantage it will give? What is the worth of repentance for a passion which has been purposely delayed till its fires are gone out with age? What merit in giving up an indulgence, when satiety has dulled the edge of appetite, or of ceasing to be engrossed by the world when every worldly end is attained, or infirmity incapacitates you for the pursuit? Alas! this is not the way to repent. Show your reverence for God by reforming from sin when it costs you some effort to reform. While passion is strong, and jealousy and wrath yet burn, subdue their flames. While appetite craves, and temptation solicits, and habit commands, and the world is urging you on in an evil way, resist, refrain, reform. While there is an opportunity of doing good, do it, and wait not for that more convenient season which may never come, and which, if it come, may bring with it neither opportunity nor a better disposition. Wait not till death ap-

proaches to cast on the altar of God, the last relics of a life which has been given up to the world; but, while vigor and health and years remain, and affections are not wasted away, and there is time and opportunity, yield a willing service to God.

If these are but the suggestions of soberness and truth, then there is another consideration following from them, which should urge any one who is walking in a course which he does not approve, to leave it at once, and enter on a course and adopt principles which his conscience can fully approve. It is the danger of delay, growing out of the progressive power of habit. We most frequently think of habit as manifested in some of its grosser forms of vices visible to all men. But these are only the symbols and manifestations of its deadly power over the soul within. It chains the spirit not less than the body. Its bonds seem but as threads of gossamer, yet are strong as steel. They benumb, they shut the eye, they close the ear, they hang weights of lead on the soul, they imprison the conscience as in walls of stone. They say to the man whom they have subjugated, think

this, and he thinks it, do this, and he doeth it. And this power grows day by day, till one evil habit may in time give its color and shape to the whole man. And the strongest habit of all is perhaps the habit of making no effort to attain a higher state of character. Many a youth has started with elevated purposes. But not acted out, they have degenerated into occasional feelings, and then have died away into the dead-sea calm of indifference. Nor stopping here, he has trifled with dangerous temptations, and the trifling to-day becomes the yielding of tomorrow, and drawn on by the resistless power of habit, he has finally sunk in the abyss.

I once knew a young man, celebrated through all the region where he lived as a strong and vigorous swimmer. With a brother and two or three friends, he visited a solitary beach for the purpose of bathing. It was a lovely day of summer. He swam out farther than his companions dared. He sported with the waves. He moved in them as if a part of their own buoyant substance. But unawares the tide had turned. He now sought the shore, but the current of the waters set against him. He found,

to his dismay, that with his utmost exertions he could scarcely keep his place. His companions called to him, cheered him, sought for means of reaching him; but on the desolate, uninhabited coast no means could be found. He was too familiar with the sea not to know his danger. He struck out in the yielding waters with desperate strength. For an hour or more he maintained his place, but could not approach the land. And then his arm grew feeble. His friends could see that he gradually receded. Before him was the shore, the blue heavens above, the white sails of distant ships shone in the sun as they came and went on their peaceful errands; but for him there was no help! They watched with strained eyes, that they might not lose him from sight, yet hoping for his rescue. But even while they looked, he was gone, and nothing remained but the heaving waves, and the hollow moanings of the infinite sea which had received him into its depths. Thus, how often have friends watched a young man, entering an evil way, and in spite of all counsel, in spite of all the entreaties of affection, playing with temptation, confident in

strength, delaying to turn, till temptation became stronger than he, and yielding and delay grew into a habit whose dark currents swept him away into the abyss of sin.

Is there any one here whose heart condemns him—who is not what his heart tells him he ought to be—who is only delaying for a more convenient season to turn into the better way. Let Scripture and the dark experience of so many wrecked and ruined men warn him not to wait. Turn now. Begin to be faithfully what your own conscience and the law of God require you to be. Have the manly strength—have the childlike disposition to obey God, which shall cause you to say, here I stop in the evil course. Come what may henceforth, conscience and the God of the conscience shall guide me. And that you may not fail, seek his aid, who will let no one perish who really seeks him—who would draw you to Him by his benefits, and bind you to his service by gratitude and love. Amen.



FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

We should always regard a disposition to indulge in any wicked imagination as a warning of the direction in which our moral dangers lie. Like those little sea-birds seen in all climes, which, when they came glancing over the sea and through the spray, flocking together and taking shelter under the lee of the vessel, were deemed the precursors and prophets of an approaching tempest, so when wicked imaginations flock to the mind and take shelter there and are permitted to remain, we should consider them as the heralds and warnings of evil deeds to which we shall be tempted, and which, if there be opportunity, we are in danger of committing.

TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.

A SERMON.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. *Matthew* iv. 1.

THE lesson for the day contains an account of the temptation of our Lord. This event in our Saviour's history has filled commentators with perplexity. For myself, I see nothing in the literal account, as such, so far, I mean, as the idea of spiritual agency is concerned, to give any special embarrassment to my faith. I am not satisfied with the reasoning of those, who imagine that they have discovered the absurdity of believing in the existence of wicked spirits invisible to the moral eye. It seems to me a surprising stretch of presumption for an unimportant creature like man, lodged on this unimportant planet, to imagine that he is the only

creature in the universe, excepting God ; and it seems quite as absurd for us to imagine that we, who do not understand more than the surface of natural laws, who only penetrate into the suburbs of visible nature, are competent to speak loudly of the mysteries and laws and relations of the spiritual world. I judge not for others, but for myself. I do not suppose that the interval between man and the Almighty is a blank and lifeless void, but that planets, and suns, and stars, and the immeasurable spaces of the heavens, are peopled with living creatures. I find no difficulty in supposing that beings with higher faculties than ours, have, within such limits as God appoints, and in harmony with the laws of the human mind, the ability to act on us, to awaken thoughts, and to help our purposes. And that this is not the case is, I think, more than any logic or philosophy ever yet has proved. I do not mean to say that the pictures of Dante, or of Milton, give just ideas of the invisible world ; but the mere fact that the greatest minds, when stirred and roused to the highest action, are so impelled to soar into these unseen realms, and to hold communion

with unseen beings, would suggest at least the possibility, that there are realities that correspond to these constitutional tendencies of the intellect. And when, throughout the world, I find that good men, struggling with evil, have not only been impelled to believe that they might look for the helping influences of Providence, but have also felt that in the persistent and returning temptations that beset the will, there were besieging powers of evil, external to themselves, I am slow to brand these convictions with absurdity. As to the how, and the when, and the what, revelation only could inform us; and in regard to these subjects, revelation says little. It leaves us very much as it found us,—with a vague human consciousness and persuasion that we live, but a veil between, on the borders of an invisible world. Sometimes, through that momentarily rent veil, a gleam of light, sufficient to disclose the brightness beyond, but not to disclose what is there, seems to break in on our darkness. And there I would leave it—one of the great mysteries which encompass our mortal being, which associate our destiny with the great order and agencies of Providence, and give dignity to

this poor earthly lot, by connecting it with what is above the earth. I am therefore not disturbed by the difficulties of the literal narrative.

But while I say this, I must also say, that I do not suppose the narrative was intended to be understood as an account of actual and visible facts, any more than the parables through which our Saviour so often communicated his lessons. It has been said that the worst errors of theology have arisen from treating the metaphors of the Bible as if they were statements of abstract truth. We forget how the forms in which ideas are presented in Scripture were determined by the oriental imagination, and what was intended and understood as the mere form of truth, we receive as if it were the truth itself. The text would alone show that our Saviour was not giving an account of visible facts. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,—not by any visible being, but by a spiritual impulse. When the demons are represented as entering into or leaving a man, no visible form was ever supposed to appear. And when the Saviour was tempted by the devil, have we any more right to suppose an outward and visible shape?

The text—led by the Spirit—suggests a vision—so vivid an apprehension of spiritual realities as to give them a kind of bodily presence. Just as in the apocalyptic vision, John commences with describing himself as in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind him a great voice, and a door was opened, and behold a throne was set in heaven—that is, it was a vision passing like a reality before the mind. When our Saviour's ministry begun there arose before his meditations, crowding in darkness on that one hour, all those circumstances of trial, pain, and temptation, which were to besiege his steps throughout his whole ministry. Not that there was evil or sin in him, for all was repelled, but circumstances presenting thoughts, which yielded to would have been guilt. And such thoughts, according to the popular language and conviction, were referred to a personal and external agency. For the instruction of his apostles, and for our instruction, he described in that symbolic and picturesque language, which makes the thought so vivid, his own condition. It was as if he had said to his disciples, as you go forth to perform God's work, you will daily be

tempted to be unfaithful, tempted to use your gifts to supply your personal wants, to attract the admiration of men, or to overwhelm your enemies by your power. But all these temptations which will beset you I passed through before you ; in the spirit, in vision, they gathered, a dark cloud, around the first solitary steps of my ministry. In my hunger, how easy to turn stones into bread, or when men mocked and doubted, to have thrown myself from the pinnacle of the temple, and visibly upborne, to have shown myself the child of Providence, or with more than a conqueror's power, to have subjected the kingdoms of the earth to my sway. But any such course would have been an abuse of these powers, and a violation of God's will ; and I chose the path of poverty, and contumely, and death. Let none of my disciples find, in circumstances of temptation, any excuse for faltering in their obedience to God.

But, whether the account be viewed literally or not, the reality and nature of the lesson taught, remain precisely the same. There is scarcely a passage in the Gospels that contains

instruction which it becomes us more to lay to heart. In this temptation, he who is our Head and our Guide and our Lord, became an example in that wherein lies either the disastrous failure, or the triumph of life. The great moral struggle of humanity was symbolized in that event—humanity in its struggle with evil, not yielding, but triumphing, and triumphing in the name of God—the great mystery of temptation and of rescue revealed through the divinest life. Let us try and gather from it that instruction which belongs to us all.

It is observable that the temptation followed immediately the baptism. Scarcely had a voice from heaven declared, “This is my beloved Son,” when he was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

Do you think it strange, that oftentimes the worst temptations seem to follow closely on your best purposes? In your retirement, your thoughts, strengthened by prayer, have risen into a higher region—you have resolved that henceforth life should be dedicated to God, to man, and to all holy uses. It seems as if in the silence you had heard a divine call, and

your heart has said, I am here, O God, to do thy will ; and you have hardly gone forth into the world, when it seemed as if all the powers of evil met you, scattering these blessed thoughts and purposes, awakening all selfish inclinations and crowding on the mind their evil suggestions—often coming like angels of light, and offering excuses, defences, and reasons, for going with them. Yet such an experience was his who was the Son of God, and he has narrated it for your encouragement. It is as if his voice spake to you, saying, the whole mystery of this struggle I understand. But learn of me also to resist, and these tempting forms of evil shall be repelled and vanish. The greatest struggles of our lives are pictured in this narrative, and pictured that we might have help and courage, and a divine guidance. It seems as if this narrative had been placed at the beginning, that all his followers in every age might be sure that he was no stranger to their condition, that he had entered into their feelings, passed through their struggles, and undergone their trials, and that thus in life, as in doctrine, was their guide.

Here are three principal temptations to which

humanity is subject. The great toil of the world is for bread. There are millions who are literally pinched for food ; there are millions in crowded chambers, in wretched cabins, who, at the very moment that they look around on fields waving with a harvest, or warehouses groaning with the wealth of nations, hear their children moaning for bread. The whole of life is given up by them to one unending battle with hunger,—and this infinite toil to accumulate the comforts and luxuries of life,—to protect old age with competence or independence, to shelter the body, to supply its wants, and to gratify the senses and the tastes, is bringing up nearly every day, to the whole human race, the temptation which beset our Saviour. There are other ways of gaining bread than by that honest labor and prudent forecast which God appoints. Every day men are tempted to violate some law of God, by the seeming prospect that in so doing they may turn stones into bread ; tempted to sacrifice honesty and justice and kindness for speedier and larger gains ; tempted by these suggestions of the devil to desert God's law ; but the answer of the Saviour is the answer for

all ; man shall not live by bread alone. Necessary as it is, though without it the bodily life withers, still man, the immortal creature, the spiritual being, destined for a life which shall endure when the body is dust—man, the immortal creature of God, does not live by bread alone. The body may be fed, and the heart may starve. These earthly gains are not sufficient to supply the needs of the conscience, of the affections, and of faith. They live on the truths that come from God ; and woe unto him, who sacrifices the spiritual and immortal life to the temptations that come in through the senses.

Another temptation, almost as universal, is the temptation to use God's gifts for personal display. It comes to the humblest and to the highest scenes. Indeed, what is that great lesson so universally impressed on men, to struggle for a higher place, to strive for a wider reputation, this deification of successful ambition, this perpetual appeal to ambition, as the chief stimulant to human exertion, what is it but an actual surrender of the world to this temptation ? Nor does it want defence. Why should I not make

use of strength, or talent, or grace, or beauty, or whatever powers or faculties I have, to win the admiration of others? This very admiration gives me power to benefit them. The observation attracted by the splendid act, by throwing one's self from the temple, by the exhibition of powers that others have not, in attracting their admiring attention, prepares them for the reception of better influences. Alas, it is the delusion of the tempter. This seeking for admiration, this anxiety for display, this weary impatience of any virtue that is obscure, this fostering of ambition in the young, and the homage paid to mere success, is but the glorification of selfishness—selfishness none the less base and sordid, though clad in imperial robes, and throned over an admiring world. It is quite another lesson which Christ teaches. The ambition for display makes one's self the centre, on whose altar the world is to burn incense. But Jesus answered, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. It is for us to do God's work in his appointed way,—not to look for the result to ourselves, but to his will. He is the centre, and him we are to serve.

Another temptation comes through the love of power. It may exist among the obscure as among the great. Fall down and serve me, are the tempting words of the devil, and this dignity and that place shall be yours. It is the temptation to seek power for itself, and to seek it by unholy means. Every man, who strives to gain it by indirect and unrighteous methods, who, to gain it, appears to be what he is not, who, at the foot of the mountain, makes professions which are to be scattered to the winds when he gains the summit, who wins adherents by false pretences, who makes truth, or philanthropy, or God's cause, a means for self-aggrandizement, who sacrifices his justice and friendly claims and principles of rectitude in order that he may gain the prize before him, is yielding to the temptation of the devil. When men have practised holy frauds, and done cruel deeds, believing that in so doing they were promoting the cause of God, our hearts are indignant at the profanation of holy things. And yet these men may have been honest and unselfish,—as who can doubt they often have been,—in doing deeds at which the heavens grew dark. But to prac-

tise the same cheats and falsehoods with no holy end, with no end above one's own selfishness, is a still baser, and more complete surrender to the powers of evil.

Our Saviour was led into the wilderness to be tempted. Still it is the symbol of humanity. All temptation comes to us as individual beings. Temptation addresses the will. The question comes, Will you obey God, or will you obey some other lord? The man may stand in a crowd, he may sit with the gathered worshippers in a church, but, in deciding that question, he is as much alone as if he were the only being in the universe. There are many things we may do in company. We may share in the thoughts, in the pleasures, and pursuits of those around us, but in every moral decision we are placed alone, and choose whether we will follow our will or God's will.

And here comes the one law that we are to obey. It is written, said our Saviour, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. This is the thought upon which we are to retreat. When the thought comes, that by a little dishonesty or unfairness

you may advance your fortunes, or that by any unchristian method you may better gain the prizes of ambition, that thought is the suggestion of evil, and then, as did the Saviour in the wilderness, you are to decide whether or not God is to be served.

At his baptism it had been proclaimed, This is my beloved Son. But even in our Saviour's case, before his active ministry commenced, it was preceded by an act of self-consecration to God— submission to God before laboring for men.

Again, in this we see a symbol of human need. A thousand labors are undertaken for human good, but the first fervor dies out, the benevolent impulse is expended, and lower passions come in, and the whole enterprise is debased or comes to an end. Where lies the secret of such disastrous failures? It is that the agents have not started in the right spirit.

If we are to do God's work, we must do it in God's name, as his servants, by his methods, and in the spirit that he requires. Would you accomplish some work of good, lift up your thoughts to its true character, see in it some-

thing which God requires, and let your will and your labors be consecrated to him. Let it be as the servants of God that you endeavor to do good, and feel that there is no greater privilege on earth than that which you are permitted to enjoy, when, as God's servant, you are allowed to labor in his cause. This self-consecration shall exalt all your motives, shall give you self-possession and calmness, shall give you strength and peace. No postponement of success, no desertion of friends, no want of sympathy, shall be able greatly to disturb the calm and settled purpose of the soul.

No drearier scene could be pictured to the mind than that which here surrounded the Saviour. It was not the waste and solitary desert alone, broken with rocky hills and valleys of sand, that was around him, but the years of the future gathered before him, dark with threatenings, full of misgivings, that ministry, upon which, when he entered, he entered on a road which ended at Calvary and the cross. The world was to be blessed and saved;—but it was to be by his suffering and death. Had some chance wayfarer beheld him, he might have

pitied him who was worn and wasted with fasting, but they who looked down from higher worlds upon him saw a holier as well as more terrible struggle. It was as if all the powers of evil had flocked around, in one hour of conflict, to crush the hope of the world. In that dreary desert, good and evil met; and when he said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," the desert was exorcised. The powers of evil fled from before that Divine will. The desert was transfigured in the presence of a higher light, and angels came and ministered unto him. And so at all times, though the fast and the despondency of the wilderness may precede the Christian resolve, though numberless temptations may beset the unsettled purpose, yet the moment that the will is fixed to do God's will, the whole aspect of life is changed; the powers of evil flee away, and a divine strength visits the faithful soul.

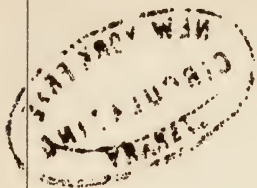
THE BOSOM SIN.

It scarcely matters whether the sin be small or great. It may be some passion, or habit, or

interest, which holds but a small place in our lives, and may by the world be unmarked. If it exist within us, and we know it, no matter what otherwise may be our virtues, this one bosom sin will finally palsy our whole moral being. That one loose plank may sink the mightiest ship that ever floated on the seas. A man's first step onward must be over this sin of which he is conscious. It may be but taking a mote out of the eye, it may be cutting off the right hand, but that sin must be put away, or he will stand still in his Christian course. And worse than this. Through the implications of society and habit, through the love of consistency, one such sin, retaining its mastery, may drag the whole character down to its own level. If one purposes generally to be a good man, this sin will constantly recur to him, and will bring perpetual self-reproach. The thought of moral or religious progress will come to be associated with conquest over it. All else is easy. There must be the place of struggle, and if he fail there, he yields up and is dispirited and lost. It is as with an army in a battle. There is almost always some point

which is the key to the whole position—the loss of which decides the contest. It may be an eminence which the husbandman hardly observes as he passes over it with his plough. But around it the battle rages. There the veterans of a hundred fights are planted, never to retreat. The artillery of an empire is pointed to sweep it with its iron hail, and squadron on squadron press on and are lost in the midst of the waving tempest of fire. Everywhere else the strife is nothing. The embattled ranks pause to witness how on that point goes the day. If the position is lost, from rank to rank, from squadron to squadron, follow dismay, and flight, and disaster. Such a contest must go on in the heart of every man who desires to be a Christian, and yet has reserved some bosom sin as an exception to his Christian life. That is the key to his character. If he finally yield there, and surrender so much of his character up to evil, he will be dispirited, his moral strength will be enfeebled, the next point of contest will be yielded, and finally nothing will be left but the show of such virtues as interest or the community exact of him.

PALM-SUNDAY.



As Christ draws near to us, how shall we welcome him? It is not enough to rear temples in his name, and to chant hymns in his honor. So of old, the Jews cast palm-branches before him, and shouted "Hosanna." The true welcome is breathed from the lowly and trusting heart, which, though from afar looks up and rejoices in the coming footsteps upon the mountains, of Him who bringeth peace. It comes from those, who, in their earthly lot, would follow him in works of usefulness, and in deeds of love. It comes from those who long for a higher purity, a more steadfast righteousness, a more sincere dedication of the life to God and all good ends. In our frailty, we welcome Him whose words are strength; in our self-distrusting despondency, we welcome Him whose words are full of hope. In our desires for a better life, we welcome Him who is the true life; and, compassed about by these shadows of mortality, we welcome Him, who stands beside these ranks of graves, "the resurrection and the life."



FIDELITY IN LONELINESS.

A SERMON FOR PALM-SUNDAY.

And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way ; others cut down branches from the trees and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David : blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord ; Hosanna in the highest ! *Matthew* xxi. 8, 9.

THIS day, called Palm-Sunday from the strewing of palm-leaves before the Saviour, has been observed for centuries by a large portion of Christendom in commemoration of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Without any special observance of the day, the remarkable event recorded in the passage from which the text is taken, may profitably occupy our thoughts. Our Saviour was coming from Galilee to Jerusalem, to the last Passover of which he should

partake. He foresaw, and had already foretold, the fate which awaited him. On his way, on Saturday, he reached Bethany, and remained for the day with the family of Lazarus. Here great numbers collected to see him, and also, as we are told, to see Lazarus, who was raised from the dead. The next day, he left for Jerusalem, great multitudes following him. Departing from his usual custom of avoiding the crowd, he rode into the city,—apparently desiring in the last days of his life to attract the attention of as many as possible to himself. In Jerusalem, his approach was already noised abroad, and multitudes who had heard of the raising of Lazarus and of his other miracles, hoping and vaguely believing that the long-expected Messiah had at length appeared, came forth to meet him. Expectation and hope burst out into rapturous enthusiasm. They laid their garments in the way. They scattered the leaves and branches of the palm, the emblem of joy and victory, before him. With royal honors, they conducted him down the sides of Olivet, through the gates of the sacred city, to the temple where they hoped he should manifest his glory,—ever shout-

ing, as they went, Hosanna to the Son of David ! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord !

But in all that our Saviour did, there was no departure from the consistency of his character,—there was ever the same mild composure—a being of heaven moving amidst the tumults of earth. It was such a triumphal procession as the world had not seen. He entered in the lowliest manner. There was no war-horse or chariot to bear him who came triumphing ;—no laurels, the symbol of slaughtered enemies ; no military guards and warlike trophies and treasures, and images of conquered cities ; no captive princes swelling the train, to be taken aside to the dungeon and the axe, as the conqueror turned towards the capital. All the ordinary circumstances of triumph were reversed. Behold thy King, O Zion, cometh riding on an ass, in humble and peaceful guise. Instead of captive monarchs and shouting legions and the symbols of violence and blood, among those who followed him, were the sick healed, the blind restored to sight, the dead raised, and their cry of triumph was, Blessed is he who cometh

in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest!

This scene and the attendant circumstances disclose what must be remembered, in order to understand the Saviour's character, and from which we may derive a lesson equally impressive and instructive,—the loneliness of his lot,—the moral solitude in which he lived. His course was one of fidelity in loneliness. His seclusion from human sympathy was made the greater by the very multitudes that followed him; for their presence forced upon him perpetually the thought of how little they understood him or the object to which he was devoting himself. Probably in this very crowd there were numbers who, five days after, joined in the cry of crucify him. Their very following of him must have seemed like mockery. The immediate cause of it was the raising of Lazarus. They thought, and rightly, that he who could work such miracles must be the Messiah. They had found him, they hoped, who should be the embodiment of Jewish passions, and who should lead them to triumph over the foes of Israel. They hoped, not to be delivered from their sins, but from

Roman subjection. A few, indeed, followed him for his own sake. Though their Jewish expectations were all blighted by his death, still some of them—love triumphing over all disappointments,—followed his sad steps along the Dolorous way ; they bowed their heads beneath his cross, they did not forsake his tomb ; in the death of all their hopes, their hearts still believing his truth. But even in their case, their imperfect understanding of his great purpose and their small number, only made more striking that moral desert which separated him from the great body of the Jews. Nay, more than this,—the multitude followed him for certain specific worldly advantages, and when they found it was no part of his purpose to meet and gratify their worldly passions, disappointment growing into hatred, they were prepared to range themselves with his bitterest persecutors.

His foresight of the future, the melancholy contrast between what the Jews were hoping, and what he knew was to take place, deepened and widened the loneliness of his lot. He could not share their hopes for their country, any more than they could sympathize with his Di-

vine purpose for the salvation of the world. One of the striking events of this narrative occurred when they reached the Mount of Olives. From the brow of this hill appeared spread out a scene, as it is described, of surpassing grandeur. The hillsides were hung with marble fabrics, line o'er line, terrace o'er terrace, stretching on to the blue horizon—sumptuous palaces, vineyards and gardens, and in the midst the vast and sacred city, out of which rose the temple, silent and magnificent, “a mount of snow fretted with golden pinnacles.” To a Jewish eye, there centred the glory of the world. On the brow of this hill our Saviour paused, and as he contemplated the scene, he wept over Jerusalem. In sad words he foretold her coming doom. “The days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side; and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation.” It must have been a strange and inexplicable scene to those who surrounded

him. But his thoughts were not as their thoughts. He looked through these flows of wealth, and splendor, and prosperity, and saw, beneath, the fins of which the chosen people would not repent, ripening for their destruction. The spectacle, on which Jewish pride loved to look, faded away, and in its place rose a vision of approaching ruin. He saw the beleaguering trench cut through gardens and vineyards; the dark lines of merciless legions, and the huge engines advanced against the walls—the famishing myriads within the city—the wasting pestilence, the raging swords of contending factions, the streets slippery with blood, and at length the horrors of storm and sack, and amidst tumult and flame, tower and palace and temple sinking to the ground. As he looked, all around him was transformed; the exulting shouts filling the ear were changed into wailings of despair, hosannas into mournful dirges, and instead of triumphal processions, rose the vision of chained and mourning lines of captives leaving forever their native land. As when on the way to Calvary,—losing the thought of his own sufferings in sympathy with those who loved

him,—he said to his followers, “weep not for me, but for yourselves and your children,” so here, forgetting himself, he wept over Jerusalem.

The multitudes with our Saviour looked from the Mount of Olives and saw only the populous city of their pride, glorified in their eyes alike by memory and hope, and most cherished by the Hebrew heart; he looked through the coming years of guilt and retribution to the hastening realities of her woe and desolation.

Our Saviour was not alone merely when he retired to the mountain top to pray, or bowed in his great agony, amidst the shadows and solitude of Gethsemane. His whole life was a solitary one. It is on this very point that the prophet seizes, in that sad and sublime description which reads almost like history: “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not.” “We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.” “All we like sheep have

gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." "He hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors." "He trod the winepress alone."

I have described the moral solitude in which the Saviour lived for the sake of the instruction to be derived from it. Through this, he who was given to be our example teaches the hardest and the most serious of all lessons, fidelity in loneliness—fidelity in the absence of all moral sympathy. Not the loneliness of the chamber, or the fields, or the wilderness; for that solitude is consistent with the closest human relations,—not the solitude of the dungeon, to which one may be followed by admiring hearts, but that of a soul which must go through the moral conflict of life alone. Christ's mission to the lonely is what is revealed to us in this portion of the gospel narrative. Fidelity in loneliness—there is no higher lesson to be learned.

To be alone in the world is a phrase which

always includes in itself mournful images and experiences. We look with a saddened interest on the aged man whose kindred and family have melted away, whose friends are gone, and who lingers, a solitary survivor, among the graves of those on whose affection and support he rested. But there are others, who seem bound to the world by ten thousand ties, more alone than he. There is much to be done and enjoyed and suffered in society. But within that larger circle, there is an interior circle of the individual life, where man must dwell alone. It is not accident, but the intention of Him who framed our natures and appointed for each soul a personal, individual discipline. I certainly do not speak of unreal things in saying, that many of the greatest sorrows, from the nature of the case, cannot be shared ; that there are anxieties, close and clinging, which come with the morning and depart not at night, which can hardly be spoken to parent or child, to kindred or friend ; that there are fears and woes which admit of no participation, and sins and temptations which must be struggled with alone, and duties which are to be done without looking for

the help or thought of others. Many of the severest trials would only be increased by being known. There are disappointments, and mortifications, and hopes deferred, and difficulties reaching on from year to year, which must be met in silence. There are cheerful faces before the world, hiding tragedies in the heart beneath, and homes all brightness without, but within dark and cold. These things create solitude. The dungeon does not necessarily shut out sympathy; but he who is imprisoned in memories, or anxieties, or self-reproaches, or fears, which cannot be shared, though in the midst of a crowd, is alone.

Let no one imagine that in this I am finding warrant for the selfish complainings of discontent, or for the feeble repinings of sentimentalism. On the contrary, this moral solitude is essential to the soul's growth. For us, who might never seek it ourselves, God creates it through the organic constitution of our natures. And if we would but use our minds to meditate and discriminate, we should find the most beautiful illustrations of the wisdom and goodness of Providence, not in the coarser adaptations of the

material world, but in these more delicate spiritual relations, in the connections between the spirit and the order of the material world, and in this nice adjustment and balancing of the elements of an imperfect nature, so that through their necessary interaction they may expand into a greater perfection. Not in severity, but in wisdom and love did God appoint that the essential life of man should be alone—enough of society to stimulate, enough of solitude for self-subsistent growth. And for two great ends. First, for the personality of man. What we do in a crowd is hardly our own act. Thought and conscience and will belong to the general atmosphere rather than to ourselves. He who lives on others, who depends for his strength on their sympathy, who is powerless, till he is sustained by their encouragement, who dares not trust to his own convictions, except so far as they are the echo of a common feeling, can scarcely be said to have a personal life. The true man is he who can be faithful to convictions of his own when standing alone; one who, though he may love sympathy as much as others, and as easily as others be stung and

wounded by reproach, can, if need be, stand alone, in solitary fidelity. As a discipline necessary to this end, man is so made and placed that in what is most essential he must act for himself, or not at all. Truth is best found in solitary contemplation. The great trials of the affections, which from their very nature are individual, make a solitude around one. The conscience, which cannot throw its burden off, is essentially personal. Remorse and penitence, and all the better aspirations of the soul, are personal. The anxieties which depress, are solitary. Those who kneel side by side and utter the same prayers, have each a separate, personal existence, and may be in ignorance of what is most momentous in each other's heart. There may be companionship, a general sympathy, and good wishes and friendly thought, but below all, there is the moral personality of the man, which cannot be surrendered or lost. And it is, that man may be man. The modern phrase is humanity, as if all human beings could be massed and blended in one general abstract word. But God made human beings to be individual men, and has appointed them a corre-

sponding discipline, which looks ever to that result. So, too, in regard to the religious sentiment. It is not by accident that the deepest religious feelings shrink from public proclamation at the street corners. No doubt there may be much and most useful religious sympathy; but the strongest and deepest religious feelings retire into the seclusion of the private heart. When penitence and hope and fear, and the struggles of the spiritual life, can be freely and unshrinkingly uttered in the crowd, like any ordinary matters of the day, the depth and strength of them have abated. The man may have risen above into a settled peace, or fallen below into insensibility. But the struggle is past. That was solitary. The Mount of prayer, the Gethsemane of agony, were solitary. One need not go to the desert, nor to the cell; the profoundest spiritual experiences will create a solitude of their own. And why is this? It seems to me that in it we may see the most blessed of purposes; the thoughts and feelings which we shrink from uttering to man, are already known to God. We long to utter them, we long for sympathy and help, we find

it by looking above. And thus it is, that all which is most sacred in regret or hope or moral purpose, carries the thoughts upward, and that which separates us from man, unites us to God.

But notwithstanding the beneficent purpose, here is the most serious part of life. Those duties are comparatively easy which can be done in company, those self-denials almost cease to be such which our friends practise with us, and trials when shared seem to lose the character of trials. The true test of character is where what is done or borne must remain unknown, where the struggle must be begun and ended, and the fidelity be maintained, in the solitary heart.

To all such lonely hearts, Christ sets forth his great example, and reveals their true support. It was a divine life of fidelity to man, and fidelity to God, in the midst of a moral solitude. Surrounded by shouting thousands he was alone. Who there had any understanding of him? No being on earth appreciated the great end of his life or death. His own disciples loved and honored him, but they had as yet no clear perception of the nature even of his

mission. His humble condition and his sufferings were a perpetually disappointing mystery to them. So little did they understand the object of what he was doing, and so incapable were they of understanding, that with scarcely a word he left it to time and events to explain what now was unintelligible. To all the gathered multitude who followed him, this was the triumphal entry of the Messiah into the sacred capitol of what was soon to be the regenerated world. But in the midst of their exultations, before the vision of Christ, on the far off horizon, dark, between him and the sun, arose the cross on the hill of Calvary, each step bringing him nearer to its horrors. While their hearts swelled as they looked on the glory of Jerusalem, he wept over her approaching desolation. What he is doing is for the world's salvation, and yet his path must be trodden alone. When he broke the bread at the last supper, his disciples knew not the sad images which filled his heart. In the garden of Gethsemane they slept while he prayed. When he was betrayed and in the hands of his enemies, they forsook him and fled. He was faithful un-

to the end, while no man knew what that fidelity was ; and all, so far from knowing it, because of it, deserted, mocked, and crucified him. He suffered for such as they who inflicted the suffering, and died for men like those who cried out for his death. Surely he had a right to speak to all lonely hearts. He more than fathomed the bitterness of their lot. There was but One Being who saw what was in him, and who sees what is in all. He was alone, and yet he adds, what must be the support of every solitary but trusting spirit, "I am not alone, for the Father is with me." There is no lot on earth so lonely, no trouble so unshared, no fidelity so divorced from human help, but it may find its counterpart in the life of the Saviour.

It is the vague consciousness of the utter want of human sympathy, and even of the comprehension of the Saviour's mission on one side, and of its connection with the overlooking heavens on the other, which as we read gives its peculiar interest to the event described in the text. Then and there was seen on the earth a spectacle which the world had never before

witnessed, a spectacle at which human glory mocks, but before which all human glory grows pale, that of one moving under the all-seeing eye, going forward, peacefully, unresistingly, to death, in order that the world, which understood him not, and which inflicted the death, might have everlasting life—of one who made in his own death the triumph of his cause—of one who foreknew that he must be nailed to the cross, that he might begin to reign.

It was a strange contrast, and sublime, between the earthly aspect of that scene and the heavenly. The fickle multitude following in the train of Jesus, hot with Jewish passions and hopes, hailed him as their deliverer. They bore their king in triumph—the king with whom they should reign over the subject nations. Except a few who had long followed him, and probably not excepting them, their hosannas welcomed him to the Hebrew throne and to earthly triumph.

Did the angels look down from above upon that spectacle? There were then hosannas in heaven, but in a different strain. Hail to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the

world ! Hail to him who dieth that man may live ! Hail to him who would bring the world into willing subjection to God by the willing sacrifice of himself !

Ride on, ride on in majesty !
In lowly pomp, ride on to die !
O Christ ! thy triumphs now begin
O'er captive death and conquered sin !

The Hebrew shouts of earthly triumph have sunk into everlasting silence. But the acclaim of heaven has been taken up by myriads of ransomed men, who, casting their crowns before the throne, repeat, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing ; and the time shall come when every creature which is in heaven and on the earth shall say, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him who sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

THURSDAY BEFORE EASTER.

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread :

And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat : this is my body, which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood ; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. 1 Corinthians xi. 23-26.

THE LAST SUPPER.

ON the day before the Passover, our Saviour sent Peter and John to prepare the place where they should partake of it. It was done in such a way that the other Apostles probably did not know the place until they assembled, and one reason may have been that he might have a few last hours with his disciples entirely undisturbed. The fullest account of these hours is found in John, who devotes five chapters, beginning with the thirteenth of his gospel, to a record of what was said and done at that time. It is one of the beautiful internal evidences of the trustworthiness of the narrative, that it was on the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who rested on his bosom, that the words of affection which Christ here uttered made the profoundest impression. Matthew, the Publican, dwelt chiefly on precepts, and laws, and miracles, and such other events

as would have been most likely to strike one like him. In the gospel of Luke, a person of more culture, we find the same general history, but he records especially the parables of Christ, and those outward events, which, as he heard them from the Apostles, would have been most likely to impress his mind; but the gentle and loving John, entering by a nearer sympathy into the mind of Jesus, dwells most on his spiritual teachings, and above all, records his words of tenderness and affection. As we should expect from the character, his thoughts rested not so much on what Christ taught or did, as on those words and events which revealed the depth of Divine love in the heart of the Saviour.

As they met in this upper chamber, Christ seemed to lay aside the light and power of miracle in which he was clothed, and as he entered the dark valley, he surrendered himself up to the tenderest personal affections. He devotes these last hours to conversations which shall impress on his disciples the depth of his love for them, reveal to them more of the nature of his religion, and awaken in them a more unfailing trust in God.

With what unconscious pathos and beauty does John begin the narrative of these last hours, after they had met together. "Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." The first event which John describes is the washing of the disciples's feet. It is an event which sometimes seems to have perplexed commentators, and yet it is difficult to understand why, for it is one of the most beautiful and instructive of symbols. He would first of all teach his disciples that their greatness is to be found only in great labors and great sufferings for human good. In God's regard, not he that rules is great, but he that serves. The glory of the angels is, not that they have power, but that they are the ministering servants in God's works of love. The glory of Christ was, not that he was served, but that he himself served, and so must it be with his disciples. They were to be the servants of God and men, were to put aside all idea of personal distinction, and to dedicate their

lives to Christ's work of promoting man's good. It was the great lesson which, through all time, man would need to learn. In our times, the world is shaken with theories of equality and human brotherhood. In vain do the nations try to reach these through revolutions, or laws, or any external contrivances. The key to the mystery is in the words of Christ. The jealousies, the tyrannies, the oppressions, the wars that vex the earth, come from the desire of one to be superior to another; the universal selfish scramble to get or keep wealth, or power, or superior position. There is but one remedy, that they who would be great should serve, that the larger gift shall make one feel that he is the more obliged to forget himself and to minister to others. By the most expressive symbol, Christ taught this in a way never to be forgotten, when he, the Son of God, clothed himself with a menial, and, therefore, in a true sense, the highest office, and washed his disciples' feet, saying to us all, "I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you."

It is worthy of note, and a part of the ex-

ample, that this service was not confined to those who loved him. Judas sat in the circle of those whose feet were washed. He knew the purpose of the treacherous Apostle, and, troubled in spirit, said, "one of you shall betray me." The disciples looked on each other doubting what he meant. It is one of those touches of nature with which the narrative abounds, that when the others asked who it might be, Judas also said, in the guilty confusion of the moment, "Lord, is it I"? Another striking point in the narrative, the moment that Judas was thus singled out, the Apostles, though they knew not precisely what was meant, saw the spirit of the man in his face; the guilty purpose flashed into his features; in the words of John, "Satan entered into him." It is a curious circumstance, that in pictures of the Last Supper, Judas has been painted black, art thus striving to describe what the Apostles saw. Judas went immediately out, and, in the words of the narrative, "it was night." It was night all around them, and all the powers of darkness were abroad. It seemed as if in that hour, the earth were delivered over to agencies of evil.

Only from one small chamber were they fenced out. In that room, the dim light revealed the very peace of Heaven. When Judas went out, the first words of Christ, as if taking the first step towards the cross, were, "Now is the Son of Man glorified." No bemoaning of his own fate, no reproaches of Judas, but his soul seems to rise suddenly to the loftiest height, and looking only at God's glory and man's good, he says, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him." When Judas left, the only jarring element in that holy concord was withdrawn, and Christ's words henceforth seemed bathed in an ineffable tenderness.

We read these words, text by text, coldly, and in so doing are insensible to their meaning. It was not a continued discourse, but an interrupted conversation, and we have the words which made the deepest impresson. When you read this passage, try and call up vividly the circumstances. At this moment, Christ knew that not all slept in Jerusalem. In the silent city treachery was awake, and the plan arranging for his death. In a few hours he would be separated from his followers. They

now listened to him with a vague, wondering, trusting affection, but they did not understand him. He was alone in this night of the universe, yet not alone, he says, "for the Father is with me." As you read, think how these words flowed out of the heart of Jesus, all melted with affection, with self-devotion, and holiest submission. They are words of profoundest, tenderest, sublimest emotion. In this dread hour he thinks only of others;—there is no reproaching word. Peter says, "I will lay down my life for thee." How tender is the Saviour's warning. "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice;" and instantly leaving such thoughts, he says, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me."

Over and over again he says, "Love one another." He tries to sink it into their hearts—the depth and tenderness of his love for them. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you, and my commandment is that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay

down his life for his friends ; ” and be you ready in love to lay down your lives for each other, for man, and for God. Never did another try to secure the devotion of followers by such promises as those of Christ to his disciples. His bribes are sufferings and sacrifices. “ The world will hate you as it has hated me. ” “ The servant is not greater than his Lord, ” and “ the time cometh when he that killeth you will think that he doeth God service. But let not these things make you afraid. You may suffer and die, but that which in this hour is my joy shall remain in you. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, and armed with love ye shall overcome the world. Because I speak of leaving you, sorrow hath filled your hearts. Yet it is expedient that I go away, that the Comforter may come to you. I must leave you now, but in my Father’s house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also. ” Such was his last conversation with his disciples. Soon he would be

in the spiritual world, and he would bind his disciples to himself and to God, and awaken in their hearts a holy love which should raise them above all earthly fears or hopes. He trusted not to interest, but to love; nor was he deceived; for that love proved itself mightier than death, and it has overcome the world.

One thing more is to be observed. What were the parting words of Christ, the words of farewell, never to be forgotten? They were not words addressed to them, but to God, the sublimest and the most touching prayer ever breathed. "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come." The whole seventeenth chapter of John is a record of this prayer, and it seems to me that no one can read it and remember how the Holy One found strength and peace in prayer, and ever again doubt that we need it. Judas did not pray. Herod did not feel the need of it. Pilate felt no need of it. The worldly and the cruel did not pray. But the Holy One, alone, on the mount, by the grave, at his own last hour, felt the need of prayer; and so long as the record of that example re-

mains, we have an unanswerable evidence of the necessity of prayer. If he who had the most spiritual strength, if he the perfect one, needed prayer, how much more do we the frail and sinful! Immediately on its conclusion, they left the place where they were, and crossing the brook Cedron, outside the walls, went to the garden of Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives. The night was dark over Jerusalem. Pleasure and labor and guilt slept quietly. The dews were falling where the Saviour knelt alone in the garden, and in the agony of his spirit he sweat as it were great drops of blood, and prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done."

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

From the beginning, this ordinance has been one of the great means through which God has communicated the holiest influences to the world. It has been a great radiating centre of spiritual light and life. In dreary ages, when books were scarcely owned or read, better than

any words of philosopher or priest, it saved men from forgetting the love of God in Christ Jesus. It proclaimed to the strong that God looked with abhorrence on their grasping, merciless, and revengeful passions. It proclaimed to the weak that there was One above, who heard and heeded their prayers. So long as this bread was broken, no clouds of superstition or ignorance could prevent many of the sublimest truths of the gospel from shining into the minds and into the hearts of men. And in cultivated ages, while men are engrossed by cares and pleasures, the slaves of the senses which should be their servants, the light of this world blinding them to the light of another, this ordinance repeats the same lessons, and our heedless hearts must confess to an equal need.

There is, in its very simplicity, a divine adaptation to the actual wants of mankind. Who shall measure its benignant influence? Could we this day look down on the earth from some high summit as the angels may look, what strength to struggling virtue, what consolation to the heart of sorrow, would be seen to flow out from this simple ordinance. Whenever it

is observed, it is a point of light in the darkness. In great cathedrals, in humble wayside chapels, in unnumbered scenes where men meet for worship, millions are uniting in this act of remembrance. To great numbers it may be little more than a sobered recognition of the benefits of Christ's mission and death, and this is well and good. But to multitudes it is the bread of life. Multitudes have said or will say, while they kneel at the altar, Here I sacrifice my thoughts of hate and anger and revenge towards my neighbor. The desponding look up to the cross and learn, when the sun of life grows dark at noon, still to trust in God. Friends, soon to part from one another, meet to break this bread which before God pledges them to mutual thoughts and memories of love. Returning wanderers here remember him in their fresh thankfulness. In his sick chamber, the dying man, raised on some trusted arm, with those dearest to him, joins in this ordinance of forgiveness, and love, and faith, and immortal hope, as his last act on earth. The penitent receive humbly these emblems of the blood shed for many for the remission of sins. And the

guiltiest, even though they do not obey, listen to that appeal which comes from the cross of the Redeemer.

From the time that this ordinance was celebrated by the early Christians in the damp vaults of the catacombs, it has been a reminder of all which men in their best hours most reverence and should most desire. All the books and traditions of the world, I might almost say, to the mass of men, do not speak of so much to awaken pure and disinterested thought, to arouse sublime hopes, and to stimulate divine purposes, as this single ordinance.

The world cannot afford to dispense with an ordinance which thus calls in the powers of heaven, to counteract the influences which draw man down to the earth. No individual is strong and self-sustained enough to forego such help. The greatest error in regard to the ordinance is not that which overestimates its value, but that which, because it is not despotic, regards it as unimportant. Better than this frigid indifference is the extravagance of superstition. Better the humble faith which partakes of it as the very body and blood of Christ, than the

light and trifling insensibility which closes the mind against its heavenly monitions.

And now that it is again spread before us, let us hear its lessons of love. It stops us in the midst of our worldly careers, and brings us to a stand, and compels us to examine ourselves, and to ask how far we are faithful to him. It calls on us to remember Christ's sacrifice, and God's mercy. It calls on us to cherish those kind and reconciling thoughts, which should unite us as a Christian brotherhood. It calls on us to consecrate our lives by a Christian usefulness. And while we remember him who gave himself for us in his sufferings, may God give us grace so to live, that we may be able humbly but hopefully to look forward to the time when we shall behold him in his glory.

THE HOUR IS COME.

Not only then, and to him, as he was going to Gethsemane, but to all of us, each day brings its special point of contest, unforeseen before perhaps; but, for the time, there centres the conflict of life, there all temptations and

trials for the moment seem to meet, and there is a summoning of all your energies to resist. There is a call on the soul to put forth its best powers ; and at night, before you sleep, in your prayers to your Maker, you are obliged to remember that the departed day has recorded your fidelity or your treachery to duty. These points of conflict come up successively, day by day. What shall we do ? The hour is come which is to try my fidelity. What shall I do ? Shall I make believe that there is no trial here ? Shall I pusillanimously yield ? Shall I allow the temptation to be stronger than I am ? No. Let the heart, looking up to heaven, say, 'This trial, which comes in the way of duty, comes in the order of Providence. The hour is come, a decisive hour, which is to show what is in me. In the order of life's discipline, to meet this trial I am placed here. In the great conflict of life, for the moment, it is here that God has assigned me my position. What shall I say ? My prayer shall be, If it be possible, save me from this hour, whose trial I fear to meet ; but if that may not be, help me, that, by fidelity and obedience, I may glorify thy name.

I do not mean to say that it is easy to meet the trials of life rightly. I do not mean to say that trial is not trial, and hard to be borne. But sad as every form of trial is, the saddest fight on earth is not the suffering which it may bring ; for suffering borne faithfully and piously, black as the cloud is, has heavenly light streaming through its broken masses. But it is trial borne in a poor, cowardly, or bad spirit ; trial which is none the less bitter because it is yielded to, which brings the pains of martyrdom without its hopes of heaven, the conflict with life's evils which leaves the soul the victim and not the master of the field.

Life is a conflict to all. There are some indeed so happily organized that this conflict seems—though here it is more in the seeming than the reality—an easy one. They grow into the graces and virtues of the Christian with comparatively light struggles. And this natural virtue, which grows as the flowers grow in the sunshine, has a harmony and delicacy which attract all hearts. But this is rare ; and after all, the instincts of man pay homage to the virtues which are born of trial.

It is remarkable, the extent to which those artists who have filled the world with their renown, have introduced into their pictures the saints and martyrs of the earlier times of Christianity. We are tempted to become weary of their perpetual repetition, till at length we remember that there was a time when the noblest heroism of the world dwelt in the hearts of such men and women as these. They were the ones who put their life into their open hands, ready to give it at any call of duty and God ; and the great artists, with the sure instinct of genius, have portrayed them in their struggles, as the best embodiments of the noblest sentiments of humanity. And that which we thought had wearied us, by some strange fascination still recalls us to look at it again and again. And the world in its admiration of the work of art, acknowledges the nobleness of faithful hearts struggling with the trials of life.

While I write, there is before me the picture of an aged man in the desert after a life devoted to Christian labors and sacrifices,—a noble life of learning and self-sacrifice dedicated to Christ—in extreme old age, emaciated, scarcely able

to lift up his eyes to heaven, as he receives the last communion of which he shall partake on earth. The wasted body, that has hardly strength left to kneel, was one at which Greek art, revelling in forms of beauty and strength, would have mocked. Your own eye is repelled from these sad relics of humanity; and yet—you know not how—the eye must seek it again and again, till at length the thought of the artist dawns upon you. The body is shrunken and dying, but all the fidelity and faith and heroic aspiration of a life are looking out of that uplifted face. The eyes have a vision of that which is unseen; the far-off heavens are opening. Let the body decay, let the limbs turn to dust, the soul's life is triumphing over mortality. The hour has come, he has fought the good fight of faith, and is entering upon the eternal life. Shall the hardships and conflicts which have left him a scarred and wasted wreck on the shore of time be mourned? Already they are glorified. He has triumphed and not they. They are now his rejoicing and his hope, and the memory of them shall be the inspiration of ages to come.

But this conflict is not confined to conspicuous scenes or men ; and in Heaven's sight, the same crowns of immortal life are won on the humblest and obscurest battle-fields as on those which fill the history of the world. While it is passing, it often seems a mystery that the pure and the gentle, who never had a thought towards others but of love and kindness, should be subjected to trial. And yet the end of life brings with it a different judgment. You have often seen a mother who has borne all trials for the children who were dependent on her, who has held any self-denial cheap that was for their welfare, who has concealed her pains, and hushed the outbreak of her griefs, and borne the burden of a life with an unrepining heart ;—in this fair world that she should be the sufferer seems an insoluble mystery. But as life advances, you see that a heavenly fortitude has grown out from that hard and harsh trunk of trial, that every self-sacrifice has infused a new purity into the affections, and that the sharp griefs, never uttered to human ears, and which led her to seek, from that Being who knew them all, only the strength of trust and faith, have already elevated

and transformed her soul to a heavenly similitude ; and as the end approaches, the mystery of trial is solved. She has fought the good fight of faith, the trials are past, the hour is come, the gates of life are opening before her. That which seemed so mysterious to others is no problem to her. The words, which the world is slow to understand, her full heart repeats : " It is good for me that I have been afflicted ! " And as the calm features rest in death, the smile of earlier years, which comes back, dawning upon them, is but an omen of the heaven to which she has gone. While we gaze, we remember that the trials of life are all connected with the sublimest hopes of man ; for they to whom, of all the great company of the redeemed, the fairest crowns are given, are they who through much tribulation have entered into the kingdom of heaven.

OVERCOMING THE WORLD THROUGH CHRIST.

" These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye

shall have tribulation ; but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world." These are very remarkable words. The Saviour was about to die when he uttered them. And in speaking thus to his disciples, he speaks to all his followers, and declares what and how much his religion has power to do towards enabling man, suffering, afflicted, tempted, to overcome the evils of life. While some are hardened by trial, and made selfish, complaining, and misanthropic, there are others who bring out of the furnace of affliction all sweet and gracious and heavenly virtues. In multitudes of cases they who were seemingly without strength or wisdom have found out the way to meet and overcome evil, and instead of being injured by it, to make it tributary to a higher wisdom and virtue. And in a great proportion of these cases, when you ask how they have been able thus to do and bear and profit, you are told that it is through the help of religion. In how many obscure homes scattered over the land, at this moment, are all the evils of life met with a cheerful, simple-hearted fidelity such as philosophy never inspired, and how many dying beds and be-

reaved dwellings are made sublime by the presence of religious faith. In some way, Christ does help man to overcome the world. He does not accomplish this by removing the evil. And still more, he does not accomplish it by making man insensible to evil. On the contrary, his whole influence is to quicken the sensibilities, to make the affections more tender, and the heart more open. In short, he does not necessarily have any thing to do with the evil, but with the human heart he has every thing to do. And what? He does this. He inspires man with a right purpose, and infuses into the mind truths and motives and faiths which give encouragement, strength, and triumph to the right purposes. He builds up in the soul a Christian manhood, which enables one to rise above the trial.

Take this poor man who is living on the brink of starvation, whose family, when his labor ceases, must be without bread; who is surrounded by all the hard, depressing, tempting contacts of poverty, but who, when tempted to drown his misery in excess, puts aside the cup and confronts the misery with an open eye

and a conscious heart ; who sees how by some dishonesty he might with probable impunity relieve himself, and yet will sooner die and leave his children to God's mercy, than let a dishonest purpose be harbored in their wretched chamber ; to this man Christ comes and says : —“ Better is righteousness than life. This course which you take, which may be folly to man, is the very wisdom of God.” He breathes into his soul a holy trust. He brings before his mind immortal truths, which give one the victory in this mortal struggle. He says : “ Better for you and your children to die, holding fast your rectitude, than to live without it. This is not the worst battle-field on which a man could die, and in this conflict for integrity, he that loses his life saves his soul.” He who himself was faithful unto the end, says : “ Be ye faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life.” And it is a profound belief of this—*i. e.*, his Christian belief, which makes this poor man a hero and a saint.

It was no intention of Providence that a religious life should be exempted from any of the

trials incident to our mortal nature or relations. Nay ; the holiest being was subjected to the severest sufferings. His ministry of love led by Gethsemane to Calvary and the Cross. And the kind of peace which he promised was not earthly bliss, but that peace which he himself knew, and which neither Gethsemane nor Calvary could extinguish. The first purpose of Christianity on earth is not to make men happy, but to make them righteous and devout children of God. Happiness will follow in due time, but the first purpose of life's discipline is to promote man's growth in virtue. But forgetting this purpose, the murmurer says, I have not deserved these trials. Why am I cut off from happiness? In order, I reply, that you may have something better than immediate enjoyment—something which could scarcely exist without the discipline of trial—and that is faith, and trust, and submission, and strength of virtuous principle, and all those sentiments which connect man with God. With these one will have an approving conscience and a hope which looks beyond the grave. But the truth which

we need to have impressed upon us is, that the first purpose of this earthly discipline is the formation of a Christian character ; and that, when that is attained, the earth has yielded to man its greatest treasure.

GOOD-FRIDAY.

“When the bed from which Dr. Peabody was not to rise again was spread for him in his Library, it happened to be so placed that at the foot of it there hung a little drawing of his early home; and right over it, from the same nail, there happened to be suspended a little cross, which a young friend had made for him, covered with country mosses. He noticed the conjunction, and the next day, when dictating the sermon which he felt that he was to preach, though through another’s lips, he recurred very impressively to that picture and the cross over it, emblems to him of the inseparable connection there should be between childhood and religion. Speaking of the Cross as the symbol of the Christian faith—the light of love and piety kindling in those deep, deep eyes, and beaming out in the way we all know so well—he said, ‘O my friend, depend upon it, no theory of human life can stand, which leaves that out, the Cross.’” From Dr. Putnam’s Sermon the Sunday after Dr. Peabody’s funeral.

THE CROSS.

As we ascend, from any side, the successive levels of the world's history, we behold, as we look upward, on the summit, a cross. The crowning figure, overlooking the world, claiming some mysterious relation with all generations, is the cross of Christ.

Whence and why is this? Why is the finless One permitted to suffer? Why does he in whom shone forth the noblest life of the world submit to death from the world? Because the cross alone could reveal the sinfulness of man, the worth of the soul, and the mercy of God.

The fact of the sinfulness of man lies at the foundation of the scheme of redemption. It was no vague idea of it, no theological theory about the origin of sin, no metaphysical speculation, but the dark, appalling, universal fact of human error and moral degradation—of sin hav-

ing its root in the soul—that brought down the Saviour and reared his cross. While he saw its finfulness and guilt in the fight of God, he saw also that what is fin before God transforms itself into the misery of man. It is a melancholy thought that the suffering of the world is scarcely more than the measure of its guilt. Wherever we see evil endured or feared, there fin is present, on one side or another, if not the sole cause of the evil, a malignant influence, exasperating it, and making that deadly which before was all but harmless.

And fin, while it makes the earth miserable, to man's eyes darkens the heavens. Sin can inflict an evil on man which all the powers in the universe beside are not able to inflict. It can separate man from God. It can take out of a mortal heart all the cheerfulness of an immortal trust. Like a deadly frost, it withers away those ties which should vitally connect man with his Maker. It comes between, an impenetrable cloud, and shuts the soul up with its own dark thoughts to work out its destiny alone. And for man, the creature of God, dependent for all things on the Divine mercy, this self-

invoked retribution includes in itself every imaginable evil. An alien from God ; self-outcast from his father's home ; not daring to think of that Being in whose all-embracing, all-penetrating presence he lives and acts ; a sinner without hoping for forgiveness ; a dying man with the dread disclosures of eternity before him ! An alien from God ;—it blots out the sun ; it turns earth into a sepulchre ; to his distempered vision the cheerful heavens seem covered with frowns. When we consider where and what man is, there are no conceivable words which express such measureless loss and woe as those of the Apostle, *having no hope, and without God in the world !* Frail and sinful, and no God in whom he trusts to support and guide him ! A dying man, and over the grave the dread sentence, Without God ! Entering eternity, and over its portals flame the words of doom, Without God !

Now the cross of Christ reveals to man his guilt. Through it also God proclaims the worth of the soul, and of those interests which belong to man as an immortal being. This Divine interference was for no secondary ob-

ject. It was not to advance a retarded civilization. It was not to awaken a loft taste for art or science. It was not to arouse the slumbering intellect. These things were left to advance or recede according as men were faithful to the light already in the world. This interposition was to awaken the moral nature of man, to rouse it from its lethargy, and to direct the thoughts of men to interests which must endure forever. Christ came because the world was sitting in darkness and the shadow of death—a world lying in wickedness. To recover man from such a condition was deemed an object sufficient for the Divine interference. And thus through the cross, erected before the world, standing for all ages to behold, Heaven proclaims in the most impressive manner the relative value of the ends which man can propose to himself. God sent his well-beloved Son, foreknowing that in accomplishing his mission he must thus suffer and die, not to teach man the ways and expedients of earthly success and power, but the worth of justice and love. The cross stands, pronouncing a perpetual judgment on the vanity of those prizes which so absorb a self-seeking

worldliness, while it declares the supreme worth of righteousness. Human science points us to the stars, and loves to trace out the progress of their shining orbs ; but the cross lifts up the thoughts to virtues which shall shine in the firmament when suns and stars are extinguished. It rebukes our sordid passions. It would elevate the mind to where it may take a just view of the eternal interests of man. It repeats to the worldly passions, to the grasping ambitions that toil and scheme and reign over wish and will, What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul !

The cross reveals the mercy of God, and his present interest in the welfare of his creatures. This is the great religious truth which we need to learn. And whatever the occasional speculations of men may be, the heart of man has found no truth more difficult to be received. Our unfaithful, unworthy lives make us feel that we do not deserve the care of God, and measuring God's providence by our deserts, our sins make us skeptical as to his care. The heavens and the earth are full of merciful arrangements, but we refer them to laws, and

separate them from God. They speak to us of the goodness and wisdom of the original design, not of the present Providence of God. The guilty world almost fancies that the Almighty One can hardly pay regard to the conduct of creatures that live and die in a day ; and the troubled world fears that its insignificance should exclude it from the care of Providence. But if God breaks the silence of nature, and through the voice of his Son declares his merciful Providence, if to save the world from its worst evils that Holy One suffers and dies, we can no longer doubt of the present interest of God in his creatures. Were an angel to proclaim this great truth momentarily from the skies, his voice would be faint and meaningless, compared with that which comes from the cross. From it Christ not only warns the guilty not to imagine that the sins of men are unheeded by the Divine eye. To the troubled he says, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. To the penitent he says, Return, O prodigal child, to thy Father's house.

In the night of the world we look up to the

cross. There it remains, a central light between the darkness which otherwise would be above and below. Its beams shine into the heavens, and reveal the mercy of God. They shine upon the earth, and make visible the guilt of men. Let it shine into our hearts, and let us examine ourselves by its light.

We observe this day in commemoration of the crucifixion of him who died to deliver men from their sins. Let us not trifle with ourselves by making it a mere formal observance. If we have come to this place this morning with any serious purpose in our hearts, there is one question we shall ask before we leave it. It is a question for each one of us. Am I allowing in my life or heart those sins which led to this great sacrifice of love? I honor the cross with my lips. Do I mock him who is upon it by a life heedless of his requirements? Has that great display of God's love been in vain for me, or is it not in vain? And while we stand gazing upon the cross, we will not merely beat our breasts and confess here is the Son of God, we will not merely condemn those who raised it and fastened him upon it, but we

will resolve that no sins of ours shall be consenting unto his death. If we are guilty of sins for which Christ died, those sins shall be forsaken. The cross shall not be our condemnation, but we will be able to look to it in grateful hope. And may God grant that when our lives are over, and all is reviewed in a higher world, the Saviour may be able to say, for you, it was not in vain that I died.

THE WORLD JUDGED FROM THE CROSS.

Now is the judgment of this world. The cross of Christ was a throne of judgment. Men are judged when they are revealed, and the stamp of their true desert is fixed upon them. Before Christ at this time were gathered,—not all nations—but representatives of the classes of human character, from the lowest malignity to the divinest love; and it was his trial that called out those actions which disclosed what they were. The presence of the Holy One seemed to exorcise the world, and all evil demons broke forth in hate against him their eternal enemy,

proclaiming their own nature in their assaults on him. To human seeming, he stood, a weak and helpless victim, dragged before their tribunals. But to all the generations since, the aspect of the scene is reversed. To all the world beside, they were not so much the judges as the judged. All who appeared before him have ever since been measured by him and his teachings. The Jewish rulers who pursued him without a cause, who dragged him back and forth from Herod to Pilate; who suborned false witnesses against him; who charged him with violating their law, and, finding that unavailing, accused him of the very treason against Rome of which they were longing to be guilty, and, through Pilate's fear of the suspicious Tiberius, wrung from him a reluctant condemnation, disclosed their malignity. The Pharisees who hurried on the crucifixion of the Saviour under false pretences, and yet, while trampling on justice, revered a form so that they would not enter the palace of Pilate for fear of pollution, needed no words to declare their hypocrisy. Pilate, when he washed his hands of his innocent victim's blood, and yet delivered him

to death, revealed himself. From that moment, and for ever, they were judged. The judgment of Judas was proclaimed in his own self-murder. The character of Peter,—its weakness and its strength—shone out in the denial and in the penitence. The cold barbarity of the Roman soldiery, and the fickle but savage ferocity of the Jewish mob, revealed themselves as they were. The love of the women who followed him as he bore his cross along the dolorous way; the devotion of John and of Mary, who had found her way to the summit of Calvary through the ranks of soldiers, and the infuriated crowd, impelled by the necessity in her mother's heart, to share with him whom she had borne on her bosom the last agony; and the true, though timid fidelity of the apostles, who feared to approach the crucifixion, but who watched at the grave, waited for no final judgment, but then appeared in their true light before the angels of heaven. The crisis which brought their hearts forth into an act was an hour of judgment. Every one who approached Christ, as if a light had flashed out from within, revealed himself. As if a voice from the throne of the

eternal justice had spoken, Pilate was judged, and the passers by who mocked with contemptuous words were judged, and as we venture to lift up our eyes, we behold, in the meek sufferer raised by their own murderous hands above them, the one whose character is the standard of appeal and judgment.

But there is a still more practical view of the passage. In reading of the Jews, we are, in a manner, reading of ourselves. We cannot forget that the same human nature throbbed in their hearts, as in our own. And as we read, it becomes us not merely to be moved by that great tragedy, enacted before the open heavens, as if it were now all past and gone; but the momentous question comes up, and ought to come up, in our bosoms, Had we, with our present dispositions, been there, where should we have stood? Yes; what would have been our course? We can hardly believe that we should have cried, Crucify him! It seems impossible that we should have suborned false witnesses against him. But should we have looked on with cold eyes, while Heaven's image was trampled under human passions? Should

we, like Peter, have denied him?—and, if so, should we, like Peter, have repented of the denial? Should we, like Pilate, have washed our hands of his blood, and, having declared his innocence, consented to his death?—or, like John, would a devout sense of his excellences have drawn us after him to the cross?

Such questions, if we put them to ourselves, probe the heart. At first, it might seem as if they could have no answer. But there is a double one. We find an answer in our conscious moral affinities. What we love now, reveals what we should have loved then. If we love ease more than truth, or power more than right, or gain more than justice, or man's favor more than God's, we may pretty nearly know on what side we should have stood. We are drawn in the way of what we love. The spirit of the Pharisee, under all changes of circumstances, of Pilate, of Peter and of John, still survives, and we should have joined those with whom we have the closest affinities of character. The question is answered in our actions. In that remarkable parable in which all nations are gathered before the judgment-

seat, and are separated as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats, and in which the Saviour sets forth the law of the divine judgment;—as one of its most observable features, he puts *himself* in the place of every miserable, wronged, friendless, and wretched man, and says, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me.” Day by day, in our indifference, our hardness, our injustice, our cruelty towards our fellow-men, he would have us understand that we crucify the Lord afresh. And in whatever we do in a Christian spirit to promote righteousness and good-will, or the true welfare of our fellow-men, we honor him. We are carrying out his work, and he accepts it as if done to himself.

The services appointed for this central week of the Christian year, are intended to bring before our minds the events which preceded and followed the Saviour’s death. If we meditate on them at all, they must at the least awaken reverence for the Great Sufferer, and horror for the moral malignity or indifference of which he was the victim. But we are called upon for more. Our relations to him are still

as real as if we had looked on his bodily presence. To every one of us he presents himself in his law of righteousness and love, and as we are unfaithful or loyal to that, we are accepting or rejecting him. Let not these commemoration services be a mere form. It avails little to read of what was done of old, unless it impel us to consider what we ourselves are now doing. It becomes us to question our own hearts. What is the judgment which our Saviour would pass on the spirit which governs us in our conduct and which shapes our lives?—Let us examine ourselves and judge ourselves righteously, that we may not be judged.

ATTRACTION OF THE CROSS.

But that which has made the cross the theme for men and angels is, that it attracts around it a sinful world—not chiefly a world of sufferers, but a world of sinners; and not merely attracts, but attracts to save. He, who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, is thereby drawing all men unto himself. Explain it as you may, the

cross is the great regenerating power of the world. When our Saviour was upon earth, it was wonderful how the guilty and the penitent, by some strange attraction, sought him who was sinless and Divine. They did not go to their fellow-men who were guilty like themselves, but to Christ. The guilty are not altogether guilty. There are sparks under the ashes, the heart of stone has in it some touch of flesh, something to which a moral appeal may be made. And the cross is the visible proclamation of the two great truths which are most needed, and have most power to reclaim a soul from sin.

It reveals, first, as nothing else could, what sin is in the sight of God. When a philosopher discourses on the evil and guilt of sin, I may be convinced or not. It is a subject open for discussion. The words pass lightly and easily by ; but when Almighty God sends his Son to die that he may rescue man from sin, if I take in the meaning of that august and awful revelation, I can only bow in my guilt, and implore pardon of that mercy, which thus condescends to our heedlessness and unthankfulness.

The fact that there is in the Christian world, among the guilty as among the good, a profound sense of the evil and guilt of sin, a sense, I mean, of the supreme peril and guilt which belong to moral evil, the conviction that sin is not mere imprudence, but guilt, and guilt before God—a conviction so far beyond what has existed in the heathen world that we scarcely find anything even resembling it,—is owing to the cross of Christ. And however it may be with the world at large, none of us can pause on that death and remember what it was, and what was its object, and remember that he who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, then manifested himself through the Saviour of sinners, without feeling that in God's sight that is the one evil of the world.

It is the cross that convicts us of sin, and surely it ought so to do. For what are we, to whom God thus speaks through the sufferings of his Son? What shall I think of sin from which God would save man at such a sacrifice? I will not attempt to understand the reasons of the Divine providence. Surely I may trust him who would thus save me, and my prayer

shall be that prayer which seems the only fitting one for any of us, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

But if the cross were simply a revelation of the guilt and peril of sin, and if there were no hope of rescue save in our own strength, I think the boldest of us, when conscious of his weakness, would recoil from that fact in despair. When I say, God be merciful to me a sinner, what an awful chasm would be made, if I were forbidden to utter the word merciful, while there was left behind only the overwhelming consciousness of sin? It is mercy that we want, the mercy of God that we need. Mercy, pardon, is the cry of the awakened human heart. And it is the cross which responds to the despairing cry of the penitent soul. I speak not of the insensible, of the morally dead, but of those whose hearts are aroused to some consciousness of their spiritual wants. What is it they need, that they may not despair,—that they may have some hope and some energy with which to meet the power of evil? What is needed? What has the world always needed? Not the help of friends as powerless as them-

selves; not the frozen and uncertain precepts of philosophy, but faith that God has compassion on them, the assurance that he is pitiful and merciful, and will hear their prayer out of the dust, and will help them in their sore need,—the assurance that he does not look coldly on us from the sky, but that he looks in love; and all language is weak to express this assurance compared with the cross of Christ. The heavens might break forth into articulate voices of revelation, and they would be meaningless, compared with that great sacrifice. For what is it but saying in the words of the Apostle, “He that gave his own Son to die for us, how much more will he with him also freely give us all things!”

I speak not of the purposes of Christ's death, so far as they relate to God, but in their relation to the human soul. It is a revelation of those truths which have most power on one side to awaken some just sense of the nature of sin, without which we should never think of a better life, and, on the other side, of God's compassion and interest in man, and his readiness to help and forgive the penitent—an assurance without which all hope and life would sink out

of our hearts, as we became conscious of our weakness and insignificance. When the twilight has gone down behind the western hills, and darkness has begun to flood the streets and to cover the dwellings of men,—above, in the clear air, you have seen a gilded cross on which the sunbeams still rested, and as you gazed on its blazing sign, you all at once became conscious from the contrast, of the darkness closing around you, and also saw the visible assurance, that though unseen by you, the sun was still shining with undecaying and undeclining light. So does the cross reared above the earth make us conscious of man's sins and aware of God's mercy. And so long as it remains, and so long as the soul of man survives, the words of Christ will be true; If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me. The suffering shall come to him, who teaches them how to suffer. The selfish shall be won by that self-sacrifice, the penitent shall fly to him for hope, and the guilty shall bow before him even if they do not repent. Christ crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God, made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

EASTER EVEN.

COLLECT.

Grant, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of thy blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with him; and that through the grave, and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection; through him who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EASTER EVEN.

THE sun had been darkened, and the vail of the temple rent in the midst. And now, It was finished. Crying with a loud voice, he had said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having thus said, he had given up the ghost. Over the dead form of the Saviour, had stood, bending in silent, unutterable grief, the women of the sepulchre. And now in the tomb lay the holiest being the earth had ever seen—dead,—a terrible symbol of the universal death of man,—an image of utter, remediless despair,—a scene to darken the earth. Had we witnessed the reality, it would have needed no supernatural power to make the heavens dark above us.

Then the powers of darkness seemed to have triumphed. Selfish ambition, cruelty, rage, hate, still remained on the earth; but the Holy One

was gone from it. It was as if the Divinity had left the shrine. Before Jerusalem was taken, so runs the legend, in the night those who ministered in the temple heard a sound of rushing wings, and voices saying, "Let us depart;" and they knew that though the temple remained, its heavenly guests had left it. And so when Christ left the earth, one may almost believe that all holy beings, all heavenly influences, must have departed with him. Then might the powers of darkness have looked out from the clouds, and proclaimed, "It is the hour of our triumph; henceforth the earth is ours."

EASTER.

To-day we go back with the pilgrims of centuries, and stand by the broken tomb of Jesus. Into that tomb, when he was buried, went down the hope of the world. When he arose, there streamed up from its open recesses a light, which has ever since illuminated both earth and heaven. To-day, we will stand by his grave, and hear him as he speaks from above to us who linger amidst these mortal perils and shadows. Nor to him alone will we listen ; for it is our privilege to believe that the thoughts and affections of some of those who stand beneath his throne, regard us even as he regards us.

We will welcome this day of Christian commemoration. This day, at least, our thoughts shall rise above the clouds into the region of perpetual sun. We will go back to the broken tomb of Jesus, and take up the words of triumph over death,—He is risen ! From the sky we will hear him still repeat, I am the resurrection and the life !—Our earthly homes must crumble, these mortal frames must be dissolved ; but from amidst these earthly ruins we behold rising a nobler temple—out of this corruptible, the incorruptible ; out of this mortal, the immortal—a heavenly fabric, which needs not the light of the sun, and which is filled with the dead who live again.

CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO HIS DISCIPLES.

A SERMON FOR EASTER.

Jesus saith unto Mary, go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. *John xx. 17.*

THE most serious question which a reasonable person can ask,—if we except that which relates to the being and character of God,—the question whose answer must affect more profoundly than any other all the views, affections, interests, motives, and reasonable purposes of life, is, whether we shall live after death; whether our existence terminates in the grave, or whether it is an immortal existence. This, I say, next to the being and character of God, is the most momentous question which can be proposed for an answer. If it ever seem not

to be so, it is because it is confounded with and lost in others with which it has nothing to do, as, *e. g.* whether one dreads annihilation ; or whether any such dread is not swallowed up and lost in the greater dread—being such as we are—of living again. But the magnitude of the true question is not in the least diminished or enlarged by any feelings of ours, whether of anxiety or indifference, but depends on the immeasurable abyss between non-existence and eternal existence—depends on the fact that it includes in itself whatever does most to invest with awe or hope our mortal destiny. To live for only a few years, or to live forever!—all other questions beside this are dwarfed into insignificance.

At times, this is felt even by those whose thoughts are most shut up to the present moment. Whether the little child that watched your coming at the window, and ran to greet you at the door and nestled in your heart, is now but a handful of dust, or a happy creature in heaven, still loving you and ready to welcome you and take you by the hand, as with fearful feet you enter the unknown realm,—cannot be

made a trifling question. However faithful or unfaithful you may have been, it is no trifling question whether the husband or wife, the parent or child, the companion or friend, is literally no more ; or lives as the emigrant lives, who has preceded his family a little across the sea to a foreign shore, where all expect soon to find a home. On one side, non-existence !—on the other side, the dead alive again, eternity, immortality, retribution, and the name which is above every name. Which is my doom ? It matters not what man may hope or fear, but between these alternatives lies nearly every thing which can most profoundly interest a thinking mind.

I regard it as one of the internal evidences of the truth of Christianity, that while it passes by all secondary questions, it meets this greatest of questions, meets it fully, meets it in the only way in which it could be met—not with poetry ; not by philosophical balancings of metaphysical proofs ; not by sentimental phrases ; not by vague conjectures ; but by a visible fact. Up to that time, one appalling visible fact had dominated over the world—the fact of death. Death

had reigned. All that had lived had died. The fathers were dead ; sages were dead ; oppressors and oppressed, the evil and the good were dead. The earth was one vast cemetery ; and not one of its graves had been broken. Men might reason and hope and fear and half believe ; but always these half beliefs were confronted by the visible fact from which there was no escape. The rising hope was chilled and frozen by a wind that blew across the place of graves. There was the inexorable fact of death and nothing to meet it. It tyrannized over the reason, more even than over the imagination of men. No voice had spoken from the closing tomb—no voice from the heavens. There was only silence above and death below.

Christianity met that fact by the only evidence with which it could be met—it met the *skepticism* of the senses, by an *evidence addressed to the senses*,—by the resurrection from the dead. We talk of spirituality, as if it did not need this visible evidence. Let us thank God that he is more merciful than our folly asks. Somehow, here, our souls are connected with the body, and high as we may soar in faith, the

highest flight must start from the earth. And God has given just the evidence we need for the immortal life, in the resurrection of Christ. Without this, the teaching of Christ would have been but one more conjecture added to the thousand preceding conjectures of wise and good men. It was his visible resurrection that broke the horrible spell which had benumbed the faith of man. It was his resurrection which reared over the cemetery of the generations of the dead, the symbol of immortal hope. I do not mean to say that there is not much in nature to *suggest* the idea of a future existence. But suggestion and hope are not proof or belief. No fact in history is more certain, than that Christendom owes its belief in immortality to the fact that one clothed in supernatural power and wisdom and goodness, not only taught the doctrine of immortality, but died and was visibly raised from the dead.

But more than this. What is the state of the departed? Here again I would ask you to consider how our Saviour's teachings have in them nothing to gratify an idle curiosity. All those trifling speculations which occupy such

space in false religions, and in our own minds, he passes by, and confines himself, in substance, to two truths—the ones all-important and only important. One is that evil and good shall meet with absolutely just awards in the righteous judgment of heaven; and the other that he who enforces the eternal law of rectitude is a Father. It is all expressed in the text; I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. All questions are answered in this one assurance. To my Father and yours?—yes, yours!—guilty, unworthy, who forget him, who return thankless lives for his goodness—still your Father! Were a volume filled with descriptions of the occupations of another life, it would not contain so much as this one assurance. Nay, the necessary limitations on what was revealed, and the limitations on our understanding of it, would be the source of perpetual error. The revelation takes us to that fundamental truth on which the mind can rest with entire security. It is one of those cases in which the only knowledge which we want is that which lays a solid foundation for the moral sentiment of trust. What more does

the believer have reason to know, except that he shall live under the care of the Almighty Father! Into what new scenes we may enter, we know not; perhaps, as the Apostle suggests, they could not be revealed to those who dwell in the senses; but we know that all shall be well. We may trust all to God, and be happy in that trust.

Our insensibility to the importance and the influence of the resurrection is caused by the same familiarity, which makes us insensible to the light of the day. The first Christians—many of them—knew in their own experience what it was to look on the grave with most uncertain and baffling hopes;—and the assurance of a future life was to them like the rising of the sun after the long arctic winter. If Christ be not risen, says Paul, then is your faith vain. If the dead rise not, we are of all men most miserable. But Christ is risen from the dead, he declares, the first-fruits of them that slept. And through his rising every believer has the victory over death. Thus every symbol of Christ's resurrection was a symbol of hope. Sunday, which was observed as a memorial of

that event, was a day of religious rejoicing. And when at length the followers of our Lord observed this Easter day as the recurring year brought with it the anniversary of the Master's resurrection, they observed it as a day of gladness and triumph. Every sign of mortification was forbidden. During fifty days, writes one of the early fathers, we observe the custom which our ancestors have handed down to us, according to which no fast is kept, or knee bent, on account of reverence for the Lord's resurrection.

But the day is in truth as significant to us as it was to them. Death still reigns in the world ; and it is the light which shines out of Christ's grave which disperses the otherwise all but total darkness. Were it not for that event there is no place where friends are accustomed to meet, where the memorials of the dead would not soon crowd on the presence of the living.

This is the tenth Easter day since I first joined you in these commemorative services. Almost involuntarily I have been led to look over the records of mortality, and to consider the contrast between now and then in this

place. What changes in these few years ! Scarcely a family into which death has not entered. Since then, children have become men and women ; the youth now occupies the seat which the father filled ; the parent misses the child ; the newly married are surrounded by families ; and how many who were the hope of their friends, how many who were the pillars of society, are gone ! In the great battle of modern times, as the historian relates, one last immense column was formed, on which hung the fate of empires. At the imperial bidding they advanced through the storm of fire. The missiles of death ploughed their way through, and thinned its ranks,*yet it still moved on. But the shattered and mangled head of the column was able to advance only to a certain line. There it melted away, and fast as the legions pressed on from behind, the front ranks still ever melted away. So in this procession of life ; never beyond a certain line,—and all are gone. What a scene were this—this death-field of the world, if there were no resurrection !

These silent revolutions !—these revolutions of death, which make insignificant the noisy

projects and changes of men!—these silent revolutions of mortality, which touch one, and a thousand schemes are paralyzed; another, and households are in mourning; another, and the welfare of a community is eclipsed;—these are the revolutions which shrivel to dust the plans and policies of men, and turn into contempt all human pride and power; which with equal ease enter into the palace and call down from his throne him who smote the nations with a perpetual stroke; and enter into the humblest home, bringing sorrow and solitude, and if God be acknowledged, transforming its modest earthly hopes into a divine and immortal faith. These silent revolutions of Providence, noiseless and steady as the stars, in a brief time make for us a new world. The hills remain; the trees cast their shadows as of old; the waves beat on the shore as they beat when we watched them with those who now are gone; but of living beings a new world is around us. Nay; already we are, in a manner, the citizens of two worlds, standing on the horizon between the living and the departed.

These silent revolutions! The departed!

A little while since and they were here. Are they here no longer? As we recall them, they seem to rise again before us. Again they meet with us. He on whom so many leaned for counsel and help, and without whom it seemed as if the world could hardly go on, takes again his place. The mother leads in her little one by her hand. The husband conducts the wife, and with her again looks up in prayer to the common Father. The child, in the bright, awed restlessness of childhood, clings to its mother's side. They come as they were wont to come, the departed with the living. This day, at least, the dead are with us. Yet, thanks be unto God! not the dead, but they who live;—who live more truly than we. And with them present to our memory and our faith, we will lift up our thoughts to Him who is the resurrection and the life.

And do the dead rise again, and ascend to God the Father? Do we here stand on the mere threshold of being? And are we here like those who waited their Lord's coming, that in this forecourt and entrance-hall of existence, we may make some needful preparation before

we enter the illimitable realm beyond? Would that I could impress this truth on your minds, and that I could fix it ineffaceably and forever in my own. The truth which ought to influence our conduct most, is not that we are to die, but that we are to live; that they who pass before us over the dark mountains, precede us but a little in a journey in which all must follow, and that the very purpose of this life is that we may make some fitting preparation for the new life in which we must find our home. These little ones whom God has trusted to us the sunshine of the dwelling and the heart,—has the parent fulfilled his duty when he has accumulated for them the means for a little more or less comfort or luxury during the few years of their earthly pilgrimage?—Is that what should be first and last thought of? These little ones,—we are training them, it might be, alas! it *might* be, for heaven. The friends with whom we live from day to day, who are endeared to us by a thousand ties and friendly offices, with whom we consult and enjoy and act, do we remember that in a few years, we who are doing so much to shape one another's characters, will have left the

earth only to enter the spiritual world? Why is it that the great truth, that we are thus preparing for the eternal life, is the one which is least adverted to, that it is so often shrunk from as if it were one to chill and scare away all cheerful and friendly intercourse? Alas for us! that the fact around which should gather the greatest anxieties, the sublimest hopes, the most serious purposes, should be overshadowed and lost in interests which are transient as the shadows of the summer cloud. For do we not know that soon, nothing of value will remain to us, of all our doings, except the Christian virtues we have encouraged in others, or established in ourselves? On this day, at least, I call on you, my friends, to consider the immortal life;—for your companions' sake, your children's and your own to consider the immortal life. In a brief time, you and I, who now call to mind the departed, will have joined them. We shall have passed from these scenes, but passed away only to enter the eternal world. We shall have come under the righteous judgments of heaven. I ask you not to fear death; but to consider the sentence you will there pass on these lives

you are now living—what the influence you would leave behind—what you will then wish you had been and done. You expect to behold Him who died for us all. How shall you stand before his presence?

Let me present the idea I desire to leave in our minds, in a different form—one which it is strange does not make a deeper impression on us.—Parents live in their children. Every sorrow which strikes them, goes like an arrow through the parent's heart. All labors are easy, all anxieties light, which promise to secure for children comfort, independence, and respect. The parent watches over the child's sickness, protects it from peril, rejoices in its intelligence, and the light of the world goes out with its death. And now, suppose that the conviction should come over the parent's mind, that these little ones are, in very truth, immortal creatures. What, after all his labors, their earthly fortunes may be, or whether prosperity or adversity shall be most for their good, is altogether uncertain. But they will soon enter a world in which we know that a right character before God is their certain blessedness. Sup-

pose that the parent should see these little ones, under his training, growing up so as to be fitted for a heavenly happiness—suppose him assured that though one and another may be taken away by death, he shall behold them all again in the heavenly world—not one wanderer gone—not one lamb lost out of the fold—united in purer affections, in higher duties, and in the relations of a more blessed existence. I think this would be the fairest vision which human hope could shape for itself. That would be a victory over death. That would make death itself the minister, not of despair, but of hope! Now, it is just such a hope as this, not for one family, but for all, that our Saviour would make a reality. And hence it is, that all the teachings of Christ, and all the exhortations of the Apostles, direct us to keep in view the future, as the harvest-field in which shall be garnered in the fruits, whose seeds are sown upon the earth.

If I believed that death was the end, I should not thus speak. But neither you nor I so believe. And the confession of our lips, may God save us from disowning in our practice.

We commemorate the resurrection of our

Lord. Nearly the whole Christian world, in one form or another, unites in this memorial-service. It keeps in mind that event, not as a fact in history, but as the symbol and proof that all the dead shall rise. It is an event, remembered with thanksgivings and rejoicings. Because of it the mother weeps less bitter tears over her dead child, and the aged look forward to the restoration of youth, and the dying mingle with their farewells the hope of reunion.

But let us remember that it is the resurrection alike of the evil and the good, of the just and the unjust. And may God give us grace so to live, that the summons from the grave shall be a summons to the everlasting life.

THE IMMORTAL LIFE.

Christ spoke of immortality in two senses—the immortal life which he reveals, and the immortal life which he awakens. He spoke of the resurrection in a double sense. He proclaimed the resurrection of man to a future state of existence; but he also taught, that as a

preparation for it, there must be in this world a moral resurrection of the soul from the dominion of sin and from that grave of the senses in which too often it lies buried. . . . As we sit by the open tomb of Jesus, let the great question be, Is that spiritual life begun in us which prepares one to enter into the immortal life? Are we *now* risen with Christ, that, when a few years are past, and death is come, we shall enter into those mansions to which he has gone?

ASCENSION-DAY.

Whatever heaven may be, there God reigns. There his laws everywhere prevail. All turn towards him as the planets towards the sun, and reflect his light, and are warmed by his beams. There is Jesus sitting on the right hand of God—not now as when on the earth, with glory obscured, his splendors veiled and tempered to meet the eye, but visibly, the milder image of his father, and surrounded by the myriads whom he has led to salvation. There are the blessed spirits that as a flame of fire come and vanish in the empyrean on the ministries of the Almighty. There are the ten thousand times ten thousand who bore from this world the spirit which belongs to that,—the martyrs of an elder age who suffered that they might save, not now as when last seen on the earth, their faint heads drooping at the stake, or their pale hands streaked with the blood of the cross, but clothed with an immortal body, and those too who bore the obscure trials of life with patient and devout hearts,—they who served God in lives of daily usefulness, and they who, shut out from more active scenes, served him by a submissive trust.

HEAVEN.

A SERMON FOR ASCENSION-DAY.

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. *Mark xvi. 19.*

IN the collect for Ascension-day, we pray that as we believe "our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens, so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth to make intercession for us, at the right hand of God." It may help to the fulfilment of this petition, and therefore be not inappropriate to the services of the day, to dwell as we may on the nature of that kingdom into which our Lord has ascended.

The first, all-essential and perhaps only essential point which is revealed, and this is most

explicitly revealed, forming the very groundwork and texture of the Christian system, is this, that whatever the happiness of heaven may be, it cannot be enjoyed, farther than there is a preparation for it, in the soul of man. It goes even to the point of declaring that heaven is not so much a place filled with outward good, as a state of the soul. Thus it says, "The kingdom of heaven is within you." Again, (Rom. xiv. 17,) "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink," *i. e.*, does not consist of outward blessings; "but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" *i. e.*, it is a state of the soul, strong in the highest principles, filled with holy joy and peace. To refer but to one case more. The happiness of heaven is almost always by our Saviour indicated by a word which expresses spiritual activity and excellence. It is the word *life*. The gospel conducts men to life; the righteous enter into life; Heaven is life. The words happiness, felicity, blessedness, he rarely uses, but a word which expresses all this, and more, the word *life*. And what is this life which is itself Heaven? "This is eternal life, to know Thee the only true God,

and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," not only to have an intellectual faith, but to have the soul filled with the love and trust of God, and with the spirit of Christ. It is to have all those principles and aspirations after a higher excellence which connect man with God, which constitute in him a divine life, and make him a child of God, *alive*. This is heaven. This is the blessedness of heaven. Without this, there is no heaven. No matter with what light and glory and outward good heaven may be filled; it is not enough for a man to be in heaven in order to enjoy its blessedness, but the spirit of heaven must also be in him. The light and life of heaven must first be in the soul, or all the outward heaven to that soul will be dead and dark.

This then is the teaching of Christ, that the blessedness of heaven depends not so much on the place as on the state of the soul. This blessedness wells up from within; is not forced into the soul from without. Whatever heaven may be, the condition of enjoying its blessedness is a heavenly spirit and life. Without this all is in vain. Heaven may be built up and filled

with the glory of God, but the heavenly spirit alone can enter its gates, and see and feel and enjoy its blessedness. No matter whether we consider heaven as a state of the soul or as a place where the soul may dwell, or both, the condition on which alone we can enjoy its blessedness is the possession of the heavenly spirit and life. Thus far all is clear. And the whole object of the gospel accordingly is to nurture in the soul of man this higher and holier life,—to make men children of God. And without teaching us every thing about which we might seek to know of the nature of heaven, leaving some room for a childlike faith in the goodness of God (which lovely element of the soul would almost be struck out if every thing were revealed,) it declares that whatever heaven is, its blessings shall be enjoyed by the soul, and by that alone, which is alive with the heavenly spirit.

But though this is the essential part, there are teachings of Christ which give us some intimations of the state and condition of the soul in heaven.

There will be an exemption from the mala-

dies and troubles of the present life, that arise out of our physical organization. This is but the natural consequence of being freed by death from the senses, and from our present connection with the world of the senses. Thus we read: That this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. And again, Rev. xxi. 4: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

But the happiness of the good in heaven is not simply passive enjoyment. It is a state of higher and more elevated activity than here. The passions and appetites will indeed no longer reign, and impel men to action. Our present knowledge shall vanish away and seem as nothing in the light of a higher knowledge which shall then dawn on the good; but, says the Apostle, "There abideth faith—hope—love." These are perennial, ever-living principles of moral life and moral activity; not like the passions satiated by success, stunned and made powerless by disappointment, but equable and

permanent, ever impelling the soul to higher excellence, and to look abroad to accomplish good, impelling men to action, and demanding action as their proper expression.

Again, in the parable of the talents, (Matt. xxv. 21,) when the awards of a future life are shadowed forth, to him who had been faithful it is said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." This would seem to indicate that the blessedness of heaven is to be connected with still higher responsibilities than those which occupy the present life.

Then the word by which our Saviour expresses the happiness of heaven, to repeat what was said before, is almost invariably the word *Life*—the life of the soul. Here we live in the body. There the full life of the soul shall reveal itself; and it shall be so far beyond what we see here, that that alone shall seem worthy to be called life, and what we see here but its faint shadow. This word life, expresses the highest activity of the soul, called out, putting

itself forth, amidst the new scenes and relations into which it shall be introduced. Nothing could be more opposed to the idea of mere passive enjoyment. I know it is spoken of as a place of rest. But it is rest from earthly troubles ; and of peace—not the peace of death, but that peace which consists in harmony within, when the lower propensities and passions have ceased to struggle for dominion over the higher elements of the soul,—a peace like that of the heavenly powers, which, though they move in their circles with the swiftness of thought, move in eternal harmony, because all obey the perfect law of God.

Some glimpses of this peace we have here. When our souls are most alive and earnestly bent on holy and worthy ends, and we are most conscious of the presence of God within us, and most sincere in performing the works he has given us to do, then do we enjoy the highest peace ; and this is but a foreshadowing of that peace which passeth understanding, of the good in heaven. This idea of activity necessarily involves the idea of growth and progress. Faith, hope, love, are all principles of action which

look upward and impel man to aspire to something above himself. This is in accordance with what the Scriptures say (Hebrews xii. 23) of the just made perfect. They shall ascend step by step and stage by stage towards perfection. We have here probably but the faintest conception of the capacities that lie in the human soul. We can appreciate it as little as one who had only seen the bursting of the acorn and the slender twig piercing the soil, could at first imagine that in that slender twig were folded up the majestic verdure and strength of an oak of a century's growth. How vast is the progress of a good man from childhood to old age, ripening in all virtues, his life shining brighter with added graces, his soul ever growing more serene and harmonious. This is but the beginning and image of a progress which shall go on through the ages of eternity. We speak of angels and archangels. Perhaps it is not too much to say, that in every human soul, dormant and undeveloped perhaps, but still there, are the elements of angelic natures. St. Paul says, "There is a natural body and a spiritual body," and that we shall put off this corruptible

and put on that which is incorruptible. This would seem to indicate that the souls of the good in heaven will still act through some outward organization, but an organization so purified from the grossness of our earthly bodies, so unlike our present forms, so subdued to the spirit, that it is called a spiritual body. But let us beware of conceiving of this as if it resembled these fleshly frames in which we now dwell. Here the body presses upon and enslaves the soul. If we are so happy as to enter heaven, we shall carry with us none of its earthly appetites and passions, but find ourselves clothed upon with a body pure and spiritualized—the vesture, the instrument, the helper of the soul.



WHITSUNDAY.

7

COLLECT.

God, who as at this time, didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by the sending to them the light of thy holy Spirit; grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort, through Christ Jesus our Saviour; in whose name we ascribe unto thee all honor and glory now and forever. Amen.

DAY OF PENTECOST.

IN the second Chapter of the Acts is an account of the giving of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost. After the resurrection of Christ, it was the most important event in Christian history. It has been called, and with good reason, the second birthday of Christianity.

You all remember the remarkable words of Christ, recorded in John, in which, during his last conversation with his disciples he promises the coming of the Comforter. It was just before his betrayal and death, and he was spending with them his last hours. In words which must have been almost unintelligible to them, so contradictory were they to all their preceding ideas, he foretells his approaching fate ; he warns them of what they too must expect ; persecution, desertion, death perhaps were before them, but his love would follow them, and the presence and the love of the Father be with them.

But there was more to be thought of than their personal sorrow. In a few days, the fate of Christianity would depend on what they did or left undone; yet how little were they prepared to be the propagators of his teachings! They had never got over their Jewish ideas of the Messiah's kingdom. In the very hour of the promise, there had been a dispute among them as to who should be the greatest. Such were their weakness and faithlessness, that they were wholly unable to dispense with his support. In the language of one of the old Fathers, "He had deposited the truth in their minds, as a seed is buried in the ground, but they had only the most imperfect understanding of it." It was with direct reference to this that he promised them, after his death, the coming of the Holy Ghost, which is the Comforter, which should teach them all things, and bring all things which he had said to them to their remembrance. They probably but vaguely understood his words. His meaning was, that, after his death, in place of his visible presence, they should have a consciousness of the Divine presence, and of a Divine illumination, which should

be a support and guide in their labors, and give them such a clear and confident understanding of his teachings, that they should be the fit Apostles of his religion. This promise is repeated several times. "The Father shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the spirit of truth." "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the spirit of truth." "When he, the spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all truth,"—words whose full meaning they did not understand. But his words, thus repeated, were sufficient to raise the expectation of some very important coming event, while they gave no idea what the precise event should be.

Again, after his resurrection, his last command was, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait there for the coming of the Holy Ghost, when they should receive power and wisdom, fitting them to become witnesses for him, unto the uttermost parts of the earth. The importance of the event was seen in the command that they should remain in Jerusalem, in the midst of enemies who had

slain the Master, and were on the watch for the followers. I dwell on these promises, because they show how momentous in Christ's mind was the event of which he gave them assurance.

You have heard the promise. When was the fulfilment? "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This was followed immediately by the first address of Peter, and these events and his words led three thousand to receive as the Messiah him who only forty days before had been crucified. There was something so remarkable in the event, that under every opposing circumstance, almost at once, the little band of Christians had become a multitude.

Thus far, I have only called attention to the

history. Let us now look at the circumstances which made it important. In the history of nations and of individuals, there are always certain eras and turning-points, which seem to decide the future. This was one of those eras in the history of Christianity.

Go back with me now forty days. With the consenting voice of rulers and people Jesus is put to death. His disciples, all their hopes and expectations utterly disappointed, with the exception of a single one, fled and hid themselves from the danger. Their number was small, and they were scattered like sheep without a shepherd. They were poor, unknown, from a despised class, and a despised portion of the country. While Christ was with them, they had followed and leaned on him, with the wayward helplessness of children. Even to the last, they had not comprehended the nature of his religion. They expected him in some way to reveal himself as the national and Jewish Messiah, and in some way to set up a visible kingdom. He had taught them his religion, but it was in precepts and in parables, whose words they remembered, but with no just com-

prehension of their meaning. Nothing was written, the religion of Christ was committed to the memory of these few men,—men who were timid, ignorant, without influence, without any gifts of eloquence, conscious that they had no hold on the popular feeling and sympathy, in the midst of enemies, powerless themselves, and having in the rulers of the land, instead of protectors, the most dangerous foes.

And now will you tell me what are the prospects of this new religion? We look at the Apostles through the mist of eighteen centuries. Their forms appear enlarged and transfigured. But remember what they were, and where they were; all of them ordinary men, not one of them possessing a leading spirit, full of Jewish prejudices, fearful of danger, flying from their Master in his hour of peril, scattered by his death, lost in the midst of a great city like Jerusalem, and, in addition to every thing else, not even comprehending the mission of him for whom they were the sole witnesses. I ask again, what will be the fate of Christianity? What prospect have these few Jews, rising above the ideas of the greatest philosopher, in

undertaking to change the religion of the Roman empire? How many of them who will not retreat from their baffled hopes to their former labors and obscurity? If in some retired corners, and to a few friendly listeners, they should, in casual conversations, tell of the excellence and unjust death of Jesus, and attempt to give some account of his teachings, who does not see that what they say will partake of the color and narrowness of their own minds?—that it will not be so much the religion of Christ, as their distorted conceptions of it, which will furnish the subject of their conversations? Consider these things,* consider that there was no written word, by which they or others could correct their mistakes or disagreements, that all depended on their courage, on their devotion to this special work, and on their understanding of Christ, and tell me, judging from all human experience, what will be the fate of the Christian religion?

Assuming that Christianity is a revelation from God, and that in its promulgation by Christ it was attested by miracles, that it was thus ushered into the world under the visible

sanction and protection of the Almighty providence ; assuming this, it is reasonable to expect that means should be taken to secure its propagation over the world ; that the same Providence which gave it to man through Christ, would provide, first, that the real religion of Christ should be lodged in the world essentially as it came from him, and in such a form that after ages might have a reasonable confidence that there was in the world the means of knowing what Christianity was as it came from Christ ; and, secondly, that it should take firm root in the world, and spread so widely among different races and languages, that its after-diffusion over the rest of the world might be safely left to human agency, and to the natural order of cause and effect ; and, thirdly, we should expect this to be done with as little of supernatural interference, and with as little infringement on man's free-agency as was consistent with attaining the result. In other words, applying this to the facts in the case, we should expect that the Apostles would be illuminated so as to understand what Christianity was, secondly, that the will, the courage, and the desire to spread it

over the world, should be fixed in their hearts ; and thirdly, that they should receive that wisdom and those aids which were necessary to secure its propagation.

Let us now turn back to the day of Pentecost. I have already described the character of the Apostles, and the state of their minds and feelings. Judging from all human experience, the day before that event took place, the Apostles were utterly incompetent to be the propagators of Christianity. They had not the understanding of it, nor the courage, nor the decided and self-devoted purpose needed. If Divine interference was needed to teach Christianity at first, it was now equally needed in order that the few men who received it should be enabled to plant it in the world. The day of Pentecost came, and the Apostles received the gift that had been promised.

What took place on the day of Pentecost ? Three things, and each essential. First, their minds were illuminated. The truths which were in them suddenly lighted up in their full meaning. Their mental and moral faculties were so aroused and invigorated, that they un-

derstood what they had remembered. A Divine influence exalted their minds to a competent understanding of what they were to teach. But more than this was needed. In the history of Moses occurs an event which illustrates the truth of the Bible to human nature. When he is called to deliver Israel, his heart impels him to the work, but still he shrinks back from the great enterprise. He, a single man against an empire!—he recoils from the contest. He doubts his capability. May he not be deluded in thinking that it is a call from God? An illusion of the mind, mistaking a strong mental impression for a Divine voice? He wants and needs an outward sign to confirm the inward conviction. And these outward signs are given, so that he may have no misgivings, and may never doubt that he is engaged in God's work. And surely the Apostles needed such a sign. We are more dependent on the senses than we sometimes acknowledge. Might not the time come hereafter in their despondency and discouragement, when they might think that the inward illumination was after all an illusion? Certainly they should begin their great work,

fortified by every reason, in the belief that it was the work of God. Therefore the inward illumination was attended by an outward sign. "Suddenly there was a rushing sound as of a mighty wind," and the air, lighted up, and divided into quivering tongues of flame, rested above their heads; and in addition to this they felt an impulse on them overruling all other desires or fears, to go forth and proclaim the religion of their Master. It may be uncertain how much is meant by the gift of tongues. Whether it was a power, when occasion called, to speak languages which they had not before learned, or whether it was a gift of speech, such as they had not had before, a conscious unloosing of their minds and tongues, which enabled them to proclaim the truths of Christ with a convincing energy,—whatever it was, it was sufficient to enable them to plant in the most diverse lands the Christian religion.



ALL-SAINTS.

COLLECT.

O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect, in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; grant us grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for those who unfeignedly love thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.

THE mysterious realm of the Invisible, which forever bends over us like another sky, and whose planetary influences have in all ages moved to their depths the tides of hope and fear, was lighted up,—its dread abyſſes illuminated, by the Sun of Righteousness. The commemorative rites of the early Christians were of a kind to raise the thoughts above the earth. they buried their dead under their altars ; they reared shrines and churches over the places of martyrdom, so that they could scarcely think of their friends except in connection with Christ and with God. They cherished their memories in the sanctities of the heart, and associated them with an imperishable faith. The dead were to them as living mediators between them and God. They had gone before, their tents were pitched farther forward in the realms of

the opening morning light ; but in this advance they only became the better guides of those behind. The dead and the living still made but one brotherhood ; a part still remaining in the shadows of the temple's porch, a part ascended into its brighter glories, but all making one church, one people of God.

THE DEPARTED.

Homes once bright with sunshine are now sad and lonely because of some precious and cherished life which is no longer present to bless the broken circle of affection. Fair young children have gone to Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of God." The promise of youth has been transplanted, that its harvest may ripen in a more genial realm. Manhood in the full vigor of its powers, in the midst of useful labors and clasping affections, has been called away ; and dwellings have been made desolate because the wife and the mother, the central light of the home, is no longer there. There

are few, in looking back over a year, who do not miss from the ranks of the living some near kindred or some cherished friend.

As I look back on the past year, I will not say a sad, but a deeper shadow has fallen underneath these arches. Of those who are gone, one had peculiar relations to this church, not only on account of his own interest in it, but as a representative of those who through successive generations had occupied a prominent place here as they did in every useful and honorable labor in the community.

Another has gone in the full-bloom of her matronly life. She was one who, from her childhood, carried sunshine with her wherever she went, and to me the very streets seem to have lost something of their light since she is gone; while the homes where her affections centred will never cease to miss her inspiring voice and presence. When she died a string was snapped in the melody of life; and the music of life's march grows more faint and sad by the way.

From another home, both of its honored heads are gone. Companions in life's journey,

united in good works from early youth to ripened age, they have passed on almost together, hand in hand, to another world. The stranger and the poor and the neglected shall no longer meet them at the gate of that home, which was the abode of hospitality and benevolence. His death was scarcely more a private grief than a public loss.

And closely following him, a neighbor and friend, in a great old age, after a life identified with every important interest in the community, another of our number has gone. He was one of those rare examples of men who carry the fresh, warm heart of youth, unworn and unchilled by the contacts of life, through all the experience of manhood and age. He rejoiced in the prosperity of others, and rejoiced above all when he could promote it. He could not bear that others should suffer if he could help it. Every winter wind that smote the dwellings of the poor, chilled him, and every institution or effort which could benefit them, found in him an aid which waited not for the asking.

Thus, as we meet here, besides the living, there is a silent congregation present to the

memory, which is not visible to the eye. They come up together with us into these courts with the gathering company of worshippers. The aged man, his venerable form bent with years, sits in the same place which from Sabbath to Sabbath he was wont to occupy. The young mother glides again silently to her long-vacant seat. The daughter, with the dew of her youth upon her, a creature of light, comes like a sunbeam to her parent's side. The young man, just ready to go forth upon the adventure of life, enveloped in a radiant atmosphere of affection and hope, looks again from the accustomed place. And from the shadow, the calm, clear eye of the little child looks out, as when, in mingled awe and wonder, it strove to pray, even as it saw its parents were praying. How easily does the sorcery of the memory restore the features of the departed, and fill up the vacant seat with those honored and beloved.

And thanks be to God, we are not mocked. Our spirits still hear the tender and solemn words, repeated to each one, Thy child liveth ! Thy brother shall rise again ? What we call the transient illusion, is but the symbol of a

higher reality. They do still live. This day they worship God with a purer worship than when on earth, and perchance our prayers go up mingling with theirs before the Infinite Goodness. It is a serious thought—it brings the invisible world near—that there are those who, but a few months ago, knelt at this altar, who, to-day, while we are commemorating the Saviour in his death, may be looking on him in his glory.

REMEMBER THE DEPARTED.

Let the departed be held in holy remembrance ! Let not a lineament fade ! But let it be a Christian remembrance. Remember them not as those who were, but as those who are. Seek them not in the tombs, but seek them in the heavens. Death may dissolve all false and unreal bonds, but it only makes closer all real ones. Not one such bond is broken. Remember them as beings who look on you with both a wiser and tenderer interest than when they were with you—wiser, as better knowing the

true ends of life, and tenderer, as better knowing its struggles. Remember them as beings who more than ever rejoice in every step you take in a Christian way, and who mourn not so much for your trials, as for your sins. Such a memory hallows the earth, and it brings almost within our vision a higher world. In the Apocalypse the heavens and the earth were seen to pass away, and before the eye of the seer arose a new heaven and a new earth. It is scarcely too much to say that the sublime vision is repeated in the experience of every Christian believer. As friend after friend departs, what was before our earthly home, expands with them into the skies. The spiritual world of faith, is added to the world of sight. Every tie broken here, is carried upward to be made spiritual and immortal.

And there are not those alone whom we have known and loved, but the good of all ages. Nor these alone. He is there, through whom it is given us to have this blessed faith; and whose visible resurrection was the emblem and pledge of the resurrection of all. He is there,—not as when on the earth, crowned with thorns,

and fainting under the cross,—but clothed in the brightness of the Father ; and over all, the Infinite Goodness, the All-embracing Love, in whom, and through whom, all things subsist. Before this vision revealed to faith, the earth and its interests no longer seem of sole or chief importance. We attain to some understanding of the words of the beloved disciple ;—I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are passed away.

OUR SAINTS.

And there are others still nearer to us and clothed for us with a peculiar sanctity ; the

pure and good whom we have personally known and who have left us. All our friends are not among those on whom our eyes rest, and whom our hands touch. As we sit alone, there rises around us a shadowy company, the companions of our thoughts, dear ones, it may be, no longer on the earth, but who to us are the best earthly emblems of heavenly purity and innocence. The crowd that presses on us in the street may be made up of strangers, but these are the intimates of our hearts, when the visible world is most shut out then are they nearest to us. They look on us with eyes of love from the darkness, they speak to us from the silence ; the sound of their remembered voices is still the music most sad and most sweet to our hearts. Though we call them not by that name, these are our saints, appointed to be such by Providence, who takes them away while yet unstained by the earth, and makes them in their purity immortal. They are our saints whom God through mutual and uniting affections constitutes our special teachers. Their innocence rebukes our low and worldly spirit, their disinterestedness rebukes our selfishness. They look down from heaven

upon us, and would lift up our faith with our affections. As they pass from us they leave behind them lines of light trailing in the skies. Their presence there gives us a new interest in the spiritual world. They connect us with heaven. The thought of them is to be cherished, not as if they merely belonged to the past, but as beings that live *now*, who love us with a tenderer, wiser, and an immortal love,—blessed teachers before whose presence what is evil in us should shrink abashed away. May we not believe that as the incense, which is the prayers of the saints, rises before the throne, their supplications go up to the Infinite Father for those who, amidst the toils and temptations of earth, can never forget them? Through those connections between mind and mind so little understood, is it an absurd faith to suppose that the better thoughts which visit us, strange guests, we know not from whence, may sometimes come from them; that among the ministries of heaven, it may sometimes be permitted them thus to help those who linger here, and who ever stand so much in need of help? Their presence on the earth was the sunshine of the

heart and the home. Their departure leaves behind them a treasure of holy and hallowing memories on the earth, while it carries new light into the skies.

Who can imagine that they have ceased to be our friends? We know not the laws of the spiritual life;—but if even while here on earth, and while it is confined to the body, the mind has, through its material organs, a kind of universal presence, and its thought outstrips the sunbeam, can we suppose that they who have advanced before us are more restricted in knowledge, and that eclipse falls on all that they leave behind? I cannot doubt that this world lies open to their view. With enlarged powers, with higher faculties, while all seems darkness to us, all to their purer vision may be light around us. How must our sins shock them! with what compassion must they look on our infirmities!—more tender, doubtless, more patient, more just, than when they were with us,—but with how profound a pity and anxiety must they regard every step of those they love, which turns astray from the heavenly path! Oh! if in our sins and follies we would but

look up, it seems as if we might *see* those eyes of love looking on us from the heavens, and *hear* through the parting clouds a voice of tender warning. And I would fain think that there are blessed thoughts, coming unawares, and holy impulses, and better purposes, which visit the soul in its struggles, from the helping love of those in heaven. Sure I am that our danger is not from too great faith in the reality of the spiritual world. That world, where is it? Is it not the teaching of reason, that it is all around us, that these heavenly spaces are occupied with spiritual inhabitants? God is with us, Christ is with us, and when death shall lift the curtain of the tent in which we here dwell, and unclosethe our spiritual vision, I cannot but think that it shall be with us as with him whose eyes the prophet touched, and behold, he saw all the mountains round about filled with the hosts of the Lord! But I care not to speculate or reason on this. God grant rather that we may feel the moral power of this idea of spiritual presence! May God forgive us, that in his bright universe our souls are so often dark with sin! God give us grace to keep our souls pure,

that we may be fitted ourselves to be with the pure !

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

The spirit of Christ has descended, repeating itself in successive generations. He has awakened in multitudes of hearts a spirit in some imperfect degree like his own. And these men are the saints. They constitute his church—the Christian commonwealth—the kingdom of God on earth.

All possessing a spirit like his, who have lived, or who now live, belong to it. And the number is larger than we think. Not only are they to be reckoned among the saints, the fires of whose martyrdom are the guilt and the glory of the earth, but the multitudes obscure and unknown, who have practised justice and truth, who have honored God in unnoticed virtues, and have bowed to his will, trustful and believing, in their trials.

There are saint-like lives and martyr-deaths which are not recorded, and worth all the more in Heaven's sight because unsustained by human

admiration—men that have lived poor, rather than receive gains spotted with injustice—men that have given up ambitious hopes because the paths of success were crooked and evil—they who out of their necessities have still found something with which in Christ's name to help those still poorer—gentle and believing hearts that bear for others what they would not for themselves, energetic and heroic hearts, that do for others what they would not for themselves—the multitudes scattered among a myriad homes, whose lives, however imperfect, are governed by an habitual reference to the Christian law. And of these you may trace back nearly all that is good in character or elevating in faith to Jesus Christ. They constitute his church, reaching down through generation after generation—the universal church to which all who endeavor to be his followers belong, differing in character with every shade of imperfection, agreeing but in one thing, in reverencing him as their guide. This is the church of Christ, of which our particular churches are mere portions and fragments. And it is this view which gives significance to our Christian rites. That rite of

commemoration in which we to-day join—its great purpose is to bring us into conscious connection with Christ and all good men. We call it the communion. It is good for us to remember the self-sacrificing and the holy—to remember those who have lived amidst temptation and have not sinned—who have devoted the means of self-indulgence for the welfare of others, whose devout hearts have prompted them to beneficent lives. We cannot think of them without having our better purposes strengthened.

And when we commemorate the saints—the ransomed of the Lord belonging to all ages of his church—we should above all cherish the memory of him, from whom they draw the principles of action and graces of character which make them deserving of our remembrance—of him who to them was the teacher and guide, the life and the light. When I remember the unnumbered multitudes on whose lives the benignant power of Christian truth has shed more or less of light—those whose afflictions it has soothed, whose passions it has restrained, and whose purposes purified,—how

many homes it has entered with holy ministrations,—homes of penury and friendlessness,—homes where grief had smitten, where trial had brought its discipline, and death its gloom—how many it has upheld who were sinking in the waves,—how many of the young it has trained to usefulness,—now many of the aged cheered with immortal hopes—how many better thoughts it has suggested, how many merciful deeds prompted, how many homes blessed,—when I see it, its power not spent, but gaining new force and developed into clearer light, going on to meet the coming generations, to breathe into sad hearts its consolations, to raise up men from the earth by the power of a divine faith, to strengthen the conscience by bringing it into alliance with God, and diffusing on every side a higher virtue and Christianizing society, and after conducting all who would follow her in paths of peace on earth, like a radiant angel, opening before them the gates of heaven, I feel how fitly Jesus was called the Saviour and Redeemer, the Way and Truth and Life, the beneficent mediator between a merciful God and the sinful, weak, and dependent children of men.

And when I think of the descriptions which we have of the Christian Church, there rises before my mind a commonwealth of nobler structure than the world has ever seen. To it all belong who love justice and truth and mercy, gathered out of all climes and ages. To it many shall be found to belong who never heard the name of Jesus, but who show their vital affinities with him by obeying the highest law which they have. To it all belong, who in any sphere have rejoiced to know the will of God and to do it—full of imperfections, it may be, but agreeing in this, that they all look upward to the highest light. And separated only by that cloud which is transparent to faith, are all the just and good who have passed from the earth—children that have left the arms of parents to dwell in the presence of him who loves them with a still holier love—the righteous that needed not repentance, and the guilty who by penitence have, in being forgiven much, learned to love much,—all occupied in the varied ministries of God—rising level above level, circle above circle, and above all, that central light in whose beams all heavenly virtues and heavenly

affections are quickened with an immortal life—the commonwealth of good men, of the just made perfect, of the innumerable company of angels, of Christ the Mediator of the new Covenant, of God the Judge of all. Happy are they whom the discipline of life prepares to take even the lowest place in this society of which Christ is the head, and on which rests the perpetual favor of God.

THE CONCLUSION.

If this were all, the very beauty of nature would but mock the human soul ; for amidst all her beauty, through the foliage of her gardens gleams the marble of her tombs, and in the midst of groves and fields and forests swell, in unending ranks, the hillocks beneath which rest the generations of the world. But over the horizon of the earth, dawning, brightening, rises another light which is not that of the sun. From the midst of the clouded glory above, from the bosom of its august mystery, come the warning and the welcome of heaven to earth. It is a warning, not cruel and stern, but sadly solemn, which says, God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. It is a voice of welcome, which says, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

The early Christians, prompted by the instinct of a profound faith, connected all that was most important in life with the death and resurrection of the Saviour. They baptized their children beneath his cross ; they hallowed the marriage-bond by thoughts of him ; they buried their dead around the altar where they knelt to commemorate his sufferings. Thus every tie broken here was carried upward to be made spiritual and immortal ; and the very tears which filled their eyes were crystal orbs—lenses—through which a vision was gained of heaven.

THE LAMPS ARE GONE OUT.

A YOUTH has tastes which are the grace and charm of his mind. Engrossed by other pursuits, he ceases to cultivate them ; he puts them aside for a season, he thinks that at any time he may resume them. But a few years pass, and they have faded away. Other tastes have supplanted them. In that direction his mind has grown hard and rigid. He does not even wish to resume them. They are lost to him forever, their light has gone out.

The youth has warm social affections, but in a strenuous devotion of himself to some business, he ceases to cherish them. He has no strifes. No alienating passions divide ; but his friendly relations are neglected and supplanted by mere business relations. He neglects the old ties, one by one. His friendly connections are loosened, his social sympathies decay. They

are eaten away by neglect. As he advances in life, he suddenly finds that he is alone. The many friends of other years are withdrawn. He has ceased to care for their friendship. There is a dreary vacancy around him. The neglected lamps have burnt out, and, in a peopled world, he is alone.

A fair home rises before your eyes years ago ; the evening brought its members together in happy bonds. Brightly shone the lamps over them, and brighter was the peace in their hearts ; but they heeded not the conditions on which much happiness is preserved. They become self-indulgent, they seek their pleasures apart, they lose a common and habitual confidence in the duties and purposes of life. There is simply a neglect of mutual tenderness and conciliation and concession and helpfulness. The united family drops apart. There has been no distinctly marked wrong. The confidence and unity of affection has died out by neglect. Years pass, and the man sits in the same room ; the twilight falls ; the wintry moon looks in at the same window ; there is only light enough to see that he is alone. The lamps are gone out.

*By neglects, which none have heeded at the time, the light of life is gone.

These are but illustrations of what perpetually takes place in the religious life. A man ceases to read the Bible, and through this neglect all personal sense of its value dies out of his mind. He ceases to pray; the thought of God becomes less frequent, he is less mindful of his dependence on God, he is more engrossed with other things, and is less thoughtful of all religious interests and duties. The light that revealed the heavens is gone out, and he is shut up to the earth.

Of the skepticism that is in the world,—not the doubt, which is but the transition state of an inquiring mind from ignorance to knowledge,—of the skepticism which consists in insensibility to spiritual realities, how much is the simple product of neglect! We measure the importance of things by the place they occupy in our minds. Engrossed by other things, the mind is crowded and absorbed by present claims. Religious truth fades into the distance, and we fancy it is nothing to others, and that it is nothing in itself, because it has ceased to be any-

thing to us. It is like the man, who, in growing selfish himself, has lost faith in the disinterestedness of all other men.

There is nothing more beautiful or hopeful in a child's mind, than its almost instinctive trust in God. How easy and undoubting is its faith, how near does God seem to him. He has no skepticism, no clouds are between him and heaven. The candle of the Lord shines on his head, and by its light he walks through darkness. Blessed privilege of childhood—blessed gift from heaven, this simple, undoubting trust in God! And how in most cases is it lost? Not by single and great misdeeds, but by ceaseless neglects, as unregarded as impalpable moisture which rises from the valleys, but which, while no one heeds it, thickens into a fog that obscures the sun. Sin comes in and clouds the clear perception of God. Worldliness crowds out the thought of God from our mind. The passions, with their noisy sophistries drive out the natural faith given to the child, and when he is to become a man, and has travelled half the road to the tomb, he finds that the simplicity of his faith is gone. Heaven is farther from

him than in his early years. The presence of God is no longer around him. The light is fading from this world, and in his soul there are no anticipations of a brighter dawn.

There is no sadder sight than the gradual going out of these lights, kindled by God for the guidance of man. Woe unto him who lives on, and the longer he lives sinks more and more below the level of his youth. As you have travelled through the valley when night was fast descending, and the mists were gathering over the streams, and the damp dews were falling, and the chill evening was benumbing you, you have seen, still lingering on the distant summit of the hills, the last golden but fading beams of the day. This was all that was left of the brightness of the morning and glory of the noon, and this was fast disappearing. So is it with him who has been faithless to the better aspirations and purposes of early days. He has sunk into the valley, and the shadows of death gather over him, and all that remains to cheer him is the sad, reproaching, fading light that lingers on the summit of his youth. O holy light, fast dying away, while no higher light

dawns! He who has thus sunk below his youthful purposes may call those purposes and aspirations idle dreams. Alas, they have been dreams to him, but they might have been happiest realities. And though only dreams, they have been the best part of his life, and the only part he can rest upon without reproach. However faithless he may have been to the promises of his youthful heart, there was a time when high purposes were in his soul. They were the light of his life, they lighted up the earth and the heavens—but the lamps are gone out!

WISDOM OF AN UPRIGHT HEART.

We need not go to the few and great illustrations. Who has not again and again seen ordinary minds, under a powerful religious influence, rising almost to the level of genius, the moral awakening extending itself to all the faculties of the man? A good conscience sometimes seems almost identical with wisdom. I think that the more experience we have of human nature, the more we rely on the simple

instincts of an upright heart. Who has not seen ignorant men, quite incompetent to defend their opinions, and yet, on matters within the range of their knowledge, possessing an almost fatal certainty of judgment, especially in regard to the moral character both of ends and men. And the secret of it was that they had no indirectness of aim, no by-ends to accomplish ; they were seeking only what was right, and in seeking what is right one is taking the shortest road to what is wise.

A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

The youth argues about the worth of religion. There is, he feigns, no reality in it. It is a delusion, a pretence, without life, without power either to support the trials or virtues of men. But he leaves his companions, he is alone, he reviews the past, and his heart reproaches him for the words he has uttered. Far away, on the bright horizon of his early years, stands one like an angel of light, belonging both to earth and to heaven, one long gone, but whom he will

never forget,—the form of the mother of his childhood. He can remember, how with a strange, sweet awe, when he could hardly understand the words she uttered, though he knew the affection which prompted them, he was awakened from slumber by the tones of her voice in prayer as she knelt by his bedside before she slept. He remembers the still Sabbath hours when she repeated to him the words of Jesus—blessed words which he knew were in her heart. He remembers with what trusting resignation she bore affliction, and all her Christian gentleness and fidelity in trial, and her self-forgetting sacrifices for the good of others. He remembers how, struck by disease, she faded slowly away, cheerful when others were sad, how her soul dwelt upon the sweet words of Christian promise, how, when her child was alone with her, with fond tears that could not be repressed, she clasped him to her bosom, and raised his thoughts to heaven, and taught him to remember his Creator in the days of his youth. He remembers how her countenance was lit up with faith and trust, how in the hour of death, when all else wept, she alone was calm, and

with her last whispered words committed his soul to God. He has seen a Christian mother live and die. He knows that hers was a soul that took hold on heaven. And, as he remembers these things, all the scoffs of a world could not make him doubt the worth of religion. A still small voice from that mother's death-bed and that mother's grave speaks to his soul, and he cannot doubt.

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

If we hold the memory of the just sacred, it becomes us to ask what was the characteristic principle of those men whom we honor. It is indicated in the text;—faithful unto death—fidelity, the principle which blends the conscience with the will, and unites in indissoluble bonds the follower to the master. They bore the cross on their bosoms, they had chosen Christ for their master; they had followed him, though with bleeding feet, through ways of pain and danger, faithful unto the end. We no longer are subject to the same trials with

them, but we are subject to those which equally prove our allegiance. To us comes the command, be faithful unto death—faithful to the claims of duty, and to opportunities of usefulness,—faithful to Christ and to God. We acknowledge Christ as the Lord and guide. In his spirit, then, enter into the trials of business and of pleasure; in his spirit, then, help the weak, and suffering, and oppressed; in his spirit stand strong amidst all temptations. Fidelity! It is itself an ennobling sentiment. Fidelity to a leader who is above us, fidelity to Christ, it makes us almost sharers in his excellences. Fidelity to stand steadfast in the truth—fidelity, whatever the sacrifice of self-denial, fidelity like that of the Roman legionary, contending for an earthly crown, to his standard,—this is what the lives of saints and martyrs teach us. Fidelity in our allegiance to Christ and to God. What meaning in these words!

When Pompeii was unburied, they found at one of the gates of the disinterred city a Roman sentinel. He had been posted there, and there had stood and died. We may easily imagine his feelings during the few hours of fearful

trial. Above in the distance the burning mountain sent up its volumes of flame, filling all hearts with supernatural awe. The air was filled with hot and stifling vapors, around him the burning ashes fell in blinding showers, the affrighted multitude fleeing for life, crowded madly through the gate beside which he stood, to find a place of safety—till he was left alone and forgotten. Doubtless life was as dear to him as to others, and under that form cased in iron, and standing so motionless, was doubtless a heart which beat with all human fears and affections. But there was in him a principle mightier than all else, fidelity to his trust. He had been posted where he stood, and not withdrawn. He could stand there—could see the whole city escape, he could remain alone to die, but he could not desert his post. Such was the rude Roman's sublime fidelity to an earthly trust. Such, Christian, be thy fidelity. Thy Master hath set thee to do his work in thy sphere—to help the suffering and the oppressed, to enlighten the blind, to build up in thine own soul, and to show forth to the world, reverence for God and his most holy truth. To thee, all

who have lived righteously, apostles, and martyrs, and saints, say, stand at thy post and be faithful—faithful unto death, to do and to bear God's will, and to thee also shall be given a crown of life.

BEYOND THE VEIL.

Death does not interrupt the continuous being of man. The gospel has bridged across and filled up the mighty chasm between time and eternity. He that lives now, shall continue to live.

They who have travelled in a mountainous country, have probably seen the clouds settle down, and hang around their summits. As you have stood in the valley, you have seen the road winding hither and thither for miles perhaps, ascending by degrees the side of the mountain, until finally it was lost in the low hanging clouds. And as you have looked you have seen one traveller and another, slowly climbing this winding road, distinctly visible, until at length they entered, and were suddenly lost in the

cloud. They were no longer visible to our eyes, and yet you did not doubt that they still held on their way, passing over the mountain range. And while you were ascending it on one side, they had already perhaps passed through the cloud, and descending beheld the western sun whose beams shone upon the other. Such a scene is a picture of our state. In the valley of life are gathered the multitudes of the world. In vision you behold their lengthened files of young and old, in slow procession ascend the shadowy mountain. They wind hither and thither; they may seem to make little progress, but the mighty procession is ever moving on, there is no stay, no rest; and as you look upward, you behold it entering beneath the cloud whose dark portentous masses hang there forever. They enter and are seen no more; but on the folds of that vast cloud, as they tumble and sway in the air, you behold, in letters of light, quivering as if its syllables were lightnings, the word *Eternity*. It is the cloud of death, and that flaming word alone is the gospel promise of immortal life; that mighty procession whose foremost ranks are ever lost from

your eyes are not lost, but still move on over the dark mountains, and soon pass through the shades and behold the sun that forever shines. Continued existence, immortal life, this then is one of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.

TRUST IN GOD.

With an habitual sense of the Divine presence and care, the trials of life are lightened. That cloud, which drifting alone in the heavens, was so black, when seen in the light of a merciful Providence, shines with celestial radiance. Even that trial to which all are called, the loss of kindred and of friends, changes its character when we see it in connection with God. We speak of the consolations of sorrow. I believe we often mistake as to their true nature, and many from personal experience of the little peace which is to be derived from the common topics of comfort, imagine that there is no consolation save in time and in forgetfulness. It is certainly an infinite boon, when we bear a friend to the grave, to know that all is not there, that

nothing is there that we love,—to know that while we restore the dust to its kindred dust the spirit has been taken up to its God. But multitudes have believed in the doctrines of an immortal life, and have found but little comfort in it when they look down into the grave. Not that this faith is powerless even to them. Far away from behind the distant horizon of mortality dawns the light of an immortal hope ; but it is distant, and now there is separation, and the craving, clinging sense of loss and bereavement. Consolation comes chiefly not from truths offered from without, but from the state of the heart within. It shines not upon our outward eyes, but the day-spring rises within the soul, and the true consolation may be described in a single sentence. It consists in a profound, habitual sense of the Divine presence, and a trusting submission to his will. Where this exists, there is such an opening of the heart in confidence to God, such reliance, that in the midst of the deepest affliction, and in the midst of tears, there is Peace—peace such as the Saviour himself had in the season of his trial.

If we look at a friend's departure, separate

from all his spiritual relations, look on it as an isolated event, if we forget God and remember only ourselves, it is the dreariest as well as the saddest spectacle on which the heavens look. Under the fair sky, in the midst of this open world, one that loved, and was loved, feebly pants forth his life. Separation, tears, loss, the grave, and bleeding hearts, and wounded affections, and broken ties, are words which but feebly represent the thoughts which close around that scene.

But this is not to see death as it is. It is like looking at the sky, and forgetting that in it there is a sun. In that chamber of mourning, there is the presence of one that is Invisible. He is present there—He, whose love is wiser and more compassionate than yours, and all this takes place in accordance with his wise and merciful law. Through the ministries of his Providence, he is calling one away, dear to him as to you. Slowly, and painfully, the thread of life is unloosed; slowly and painfully the spirit separates itself from its mortal dwelling; but God is there, and it is his hand. At length there remain visible to you only the closed

eyes and still features of death. But were your eyes couched, so that you might look in on immortal scenes, you should behold the one you loved, freed from the burden of the flesh, already with purer and holier beings; you should behold that Infinite care still sheltering the departed as it shelters those who remain, and love uniting those on earth and those in heaven. In the hour of sorrow, we may say, It is God's hand. It is his presence; and when the heart can truly say, "I trust in thee; I resign to thee that which was so loved; I commit my own feeble and faltering heart to thee,"—in that self-surrender to God, in that alliance of the child with the Infinite Parent, in that trusting faith which in the hour of death sees not chiefly the body, but the soul loosening itself from its mortal frame, sees the presence of Him who not only gave but is taking away—there is a consolation which all the darkness of the grave and the transient separations of death cannot extinguish.

And we, too, must pass through the same scene. And what shall give us support and enable us to meet with self-collected composure

that hour? If the mind retain its full activity, and is aware of what is taking place, but one thing—trust in God. In that hour, my strength shall fail, my friends may stand around me, but their help is in vain. They may watch my closing eyes, they may bear my body to the grave, but there the tenderest affections leave me. Yet there is One Being still with me. He was with me in health. He was with me in unnumbered blessings. He made those around me dear to me. In every conceivable way he has given me assurance, such as no earthly parent gives a child, of his goodness. He is still with me, and as the body fails, the spirit becomes only more conscious of his presence.

CHRIST OUR LIFE.

I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered. *John* xv. 5, 6.

THE gospel teaches that there is a vital relation between the eternal life in the soul and that life in Jesus Christ. The text states it, "I am

the vine, ye are the branches ; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me.” The vital circulations flow from the trunk into the branches, and when the branch is cut off, it withers and dies. It is no matter of accident, but a part of the great order of Divine Providence, which connects the humblest wayside virtue on earth with the great life of heaven. Almighty God has provided many ways for enlightening the human intellect,—made the earth, and the sky, and the varied discipline of our mortal lot, the means of exciting, stimulating, and developing the earlier rudimental forms of human virtue. But for the renovation of the world, for raising it above the level of its ordinary earthly motions, the great centre both of moral illumination and inspiration is Jesus Christ. In that Divine life, raised between heaven and earth, is our life. We will dwell on it, hoping that some rays of its brightness may break through our sins into our hearts. In our weakness we will approach him, though but to touch the hem of his garment. In a depraved world we will look to him, that we

may keep our faith in divine excellences. We will look to his cross that we may learn to abhor our sins. When in my frailty I despond and despair, and dare not look up to the Infinite Holiness, I will say, "O thou great Intercessor, who didst know this mortal lot, pray for me who am unworthy to pray." And when the shadows of death gather over us, may we be able to say, "Lord Jesus, we trust in thee?"

Let the myriads of mourners who have found comfort, not in insensibility, but in submission, advance and say whence came the light of hope in that Gethsemane of trial. And they shall answer, We bowed with Christ—with him we said, "'Thy will be done," and the presence that strengthened Him gave strength to us. Let those redeemed from sin advance and say, how it was Christ who led them by the hand to a better life.

Come, all saintly virtues, that through faith have triumphed over the world, and cast down your palms of triumph before the feet of the Deliverer. But if this may not be, if this world knows not how to utter his praise, if the earth is only to witness his shame, there is another

scene which shall witness his glory. In vision, the seer beheld from the sacred mount the centre of a boundless amphitheatre, the grateful transports of a world that he had redeemed. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.

That chorus in the skies comes not down through our earthly atmosphere, but God grant

that the spirit here may be found in us, that shall enable us hereafter, though it be most humbly and in the outermost ranks, to join in that song of the redeemed.



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